

# Open Research Online

---

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

## An Evaluation of a Mindfulness Programme in a Primary School

### Thesis

#### How to cite:

Calcutt, Jane (2021). An Evaluation of a Mindfulness Programme in a Primary School. EdD thesis The Open University.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2020 Jane Calcutt



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:  
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.00012961>

---

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

---

[oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk)



# **An Evaluation of a Mindfulness Programme in a Primary School**

Jane Calcutt

Centre for Research in Education and  
Educational Technology

**Doctorate in Education**

30th October 2020

# Abstract

This study seeks to evaluate mindfulness in a primary school through investigating pupil and adult opinions of a six-hour, whole class programme. Positioned as democratic evaluation, it was underpinned by a social justice framework using case study methods. Evaluation questions were formulated after a detailed review of the literature, the core question being 'To what extent can the programme be deemed as successful, particularly taking into account the views of participants?'

I taught the programme to a Year 3 class with up to three teaching assistants as non-participant observers. Methods to establish observer perceptions included pre- and post-programme interviews moving to the construction and amendment of personal concept maps. As the mindfulness facilitator I kept a diary with personal views on each lesson and weekly responses from observers. Pupil perceptions were gathered through focus group discussions following each lesson. Audio recordings were transcribed and analysed thematically along with adult interviews, concept maps and diary extracts. Findings were validated through discussion with participants.

Themes arising indicated that lessons were both enjoyable and accessible, to a considerable extent, for all pupils and the programme received a high degree of confirmation. Deeper concepts were illuminated such as the fusion of mindfulness and social-emotional learning to enhance learning. The impact of facilitator beliefs was also explored in relation to promoting social justice principles. Findings are discussed relative to roles for mindfulness teaching and practice within primary schools. Adaptations are proposed, for both school and the Paws b programme, to increase effectiveness and principled application within and beyond the classroom. Future directions for research are then outlined to include, for instance, the development of qualitative investigations of mindfulness within primary school and greater opportunities for participant evaluations in new programme development.

# Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr Diana Harris and Dr Roger Hancock, for their support, guidance, encouragement and advice. I could not have wished for better mentors during my doctorate study.

I would also like to acknowledge my school, head teacher and all the participants, especially the children for their exuberant enthusiasm and insights.

Finally, to my husband, Mark- I simply could not have done this without you- special thanks.

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination, which has led to the award of the doctorate. The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts as qualified by The Open University.

# Table of Contents

<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Overview .....	1
Programme Setting.....	2
Mental Health Concerns in Schools .....	3
My Background .....	4
Evaluation Purpose and Questions.....	6
Thesis Overview .....	8
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Introduction .....	9
Literature Search.....	9
Mindfulness and the Secular-Therapeutic Perspective .....	11
Mindfulness and the Religious-Spiritual Perspective.....	18
Criticisms of Current Perspectives.....	25
Mindfulness for Social Change .....	27
The Mindfulness in Schools Project.....	28
A New Educational Perspective for Mindfulness.....	32
The Nature of Mindfulness.....	37
Whole Programme Evaluation .....	38
Summary.....	42
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Introduction .....	44
Social Justice Methodology .....	44
Mindful Evaluation Methodology .....	48
Qualitative Evaluation.....	50
Children’s Voices.....	52
Evaluation Design .....	54
Approaches to Data Analysis.....	57
Summary.....	58
<b>CHAPTER 4 METHODS.....</b>	<b>60</b>
Introduction .....	60
Evaluation Questions.....	60
Evaluation Methods.....	61
Participants .....	64

<i>Table 1- Final list of participants and children referenced within the data</i> .....	67
Ethics and Informed Consent .....	67
Developments from the Pilot Study.....	69
Summary.....	71
<b>CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THEMES 1 AND 2 .....</b>	<b>73</b>
Introduction .....	73
<i>Table 2- Evaluation Questions, Themes and Sub Themes</i> .....	73
Theme 1- Content of Programme .....	74
<i>Children's Engagement</i> .....	74
<i>Perceived Learning</i> .....	78
<i>Challenges</i> .....	83
Theme 2- Awareness .....	88
<i>Awareness of Self</i> .....	89
<i>Awareness of Choices</i> .....	95
<i>Awareness of Others</i> .....	99
Summary.....	102
<b>CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF THEMES 3 AND 4 .....</b>	<b>103</b>
Introduction .....	103
Theme 3 Connection .....	103
<i>Teacher/Facilitator Relationship with Children</i> .....	104
<i>Relationship between the Individual and Others</i> .....	107
<i>Outside Experiences</i> .....	109
Summary.....	113
Theme 4- Programme Development.....	113
<i>Adaptability</i> .....	114
<i>Effects on Social and Emotional Behaviour</i> .....	116
<i>Issues, Changes and Ways Forward</i> .....	118
Summary.....	123
<b>CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>124</b>
Introduction .....	124
Concepts that Arose from the Data.....	124
Connection .....	129
Limitations .....	130
Summary.....	134
<b>CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>135</b>
Introduction .....	135
Evaluation Questions Addressed.....	135

Process, Purpose and Context .....	140
Emerging Considerations .....	142
Recommendations.....	146
Ongoing Reflections .....	148
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>164</b>
Appendix 1 – Qualitative Studies in Primary Schools.....	164
Appendix 2 – Interview Questions .....	169
Appendix 3 – Head Teacher Consent Letter .....	170
Appendix 4 – Adult Observer Information Letter .....	171
Appendix 5 – Child Information Letter.....	172
Appendix 6 – Parent/Guardian Information Letter.....	173
Appendix 7 – Lesson Observation Sheet.....	174
Appendix 8 – Methods for Evaluation .....	175
Appendix 9 – Brooklyn’s Written Questionnaire .....	177
Appendix 10 – Head Teacher Interview Questions .....	178
Appendix 11 – Pilot Study Analysis .....	179
Appendix 12 – Data Analysis Transcript Example .....	180
Appendix 13 – Data Analysis Table Example .....	181
Appendix 14 – Summary of Paws b Lessons.....	182
Appendix 15 – Adult Participant Concept Maps .....	184
Appendix 16 – Some Pictures from the Lessons .....	187
Appendix 17 – Children’s Voices Supporting Social Justice Features.....	188

## List of tables

Table 1: Final list of participants .....	67
Table 2: Evaluation Questions, Themes and Sub Themes.....	73



## Acronyms

FOFBOC	Feet on Floor, Bottom on Chair -mindfulness sitting practice
MiSP	The Mindfulness in Schools Project
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment -teacher non-contact time
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SATs	Year 6 Statutory Assessment Tests

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Overview

This thesis provides an account of an investigation of mindfulness in a Year 3 class (seven and eight years old) to evaluate a mindfulness programme in a primary school. The evaluation is based on my views as the facilitator of the 'Paws b programme' (see below) and three staff members. These include the class-based teaching assistant Blue, along with Ann, an additional teaching assistant supporting the year group, and Brooklyn (all pseudonyms) the previous class-based teaching assistant. Their observer perceptions of the effectiveness of the lessons are illustrated together with children's personal experiences and views. Children's views primarily came from discussions within an after-school club established for evaluation purposes. This introduction will illustrate reasons for my study, through a brief explanation of the current school context, wider social issues and my own personal history that led me to embark on this project.

Paws b<sup>1</sup> is a classroom-based series of six lessons, taught by a qualified Paws b practitioner, consisting of detailed lesson plans, supporting Power Points and worksheets. This programme has been developed and promoted by the Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP) registered charity. Their vision is that every child should possess the skills to help them manage difficulty and flourish. Aims include informing, creating, training and supporting the teaching of secular mindfulness to young people and those who care for them. There also appears to be an empowering quality to their programmes as course materials highlight such principles as inviting experimentation and enquiry, welcoming whatever comes forth and acknowledging children's ideas as preponderant. Paws b is the primary phase of the charity's ongoing mindfulness curriculum, created by primary teachers together with the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice at Bangor University. MiSP claim to be the leading provider of mindfulness classroom curricula in the UK and encourage an evidence base of research to support the effectiveness of their primary, secondary and adult programmes (MiSP, 2020).

---

<sup>1</sup> Paws b relates to the mindfulness practice 'pause and be'. It also makes reference to the puppy metaphor used in the lessons. This metaphor likens the mind to a puppy. It can be playful and excited but, as with a puppy, it can be trained with consistency and kindness.

## Programme Setting

The setting is a three-form entry primary school. The school opened in September 2011 following the closure of the former infant and junior schools which shared the same site. The schools were built in the 1950s, but still look fairly modern and well maintained. There is a large playing field, plenty of trees and exciting additions such as a decommissioned bus, which is now the school library. Six hundred and fifty-six children are currently on roll from a wide, surrounding area.

The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is slightly lower than the national average. The premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children from service families. Numbers of pupils supported for additional educational and behavioural needs is above average although the proportion of pupils needing outside provision through a statement of special educational needs is below average. There are currently ten children in need of one-to-one adult support for emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are predominantly White British, although there are a low ethnic minority of Chinese, Asian, Black and Eastern European families. Three children speak English as an additional language which is significantly lower than the national average. Around 17% of pupils receive free school meals so this locality may not be what a critical researcher would identify as disadvantaged. However, the school is aware that some children face very difficult circumstances and discrimination through a variety of reasons that cannot be clearly categorised as race, social class, special educational needs, gender and/or sexuality. There is also the wide catchment area to consider.

The surrounding area is viewed as an affluent suburb, originally a standalone village incorporated into the city at the beginning of last century. The area maintains a close connection to its vibrant, Victorian history and has a number of listed buildings and landmarks. At first glance this school appears to be a leafy, middle class haven, but this is not the case. A number of children who attend the school travel from surrounding areas that have suffered from poverty and neglect. Our intake exhibits a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

My role within school is very specific. A year after amalgamation I began covering teachers for their allotted non-contact time. Presently I teach Nursery and Year 1 in the mornings. During the afternoons I teach Key Stage 2 Personal, Social and Health Education or Dance in half hour sessions per class. I teach all of the children throughout their primary school years so do get to know them very well. The Key Stage 2 children accept that my lessons can be different from others, as they

promote mainly discussion. My teaching role is a significant factor for this evaluation and implications will be investigated later on.

## **Mental Health Concerns in Schools**

As a primary school teacher of 25 years, I have observed increasing levels of anxiety in both staff and pupils. Senior management have expressed similar concerns, particularly in relation to the impact on children's behaviour and learning. The current pastoral system includes learning mentors and small group programmes, identifying individuals exhibiting specific emotional and behavioural needs. Management, however, recognises the need to introduce strategies that would benefit the emotional wellbeing of all pupils and staff.

Our school concerns may be seen as part of a national and global trend. The World Health Organisation has warned that mental health will be the biggest burden of disease in developed countries by 2030 (Alonso, 2012). Within the UK, studies show levels of distress accelerating for children in today's society. The Good Childhood Report (The Children's Society, 2016) estimated that up to 10% of children aged 10 to 17 may feel that their lives have little meaning or purpose. According to the Department for Education (2016) 9.8% of children aged five to 16 had a clinically diagnosed disorder, with approximately a further 15% at increased risk of developing future mental health problems. NHS Digital (2018) showed comparable data for children in 1999, 2004 and 2017. According to these statistics, one in eight children between the ages five to 19 identified as having at least one mental health issue. Emotional disorders were most prevalent and rates increased with age.

These statistics alone could portray mental health issues as growing problems that lie within individuals. The Children's Society (Gee, 2018) viewed society as allowing children's problems to manifest. They stated that 75% of young people in need are not receiving treatment because of a lack of available services and funding. The Exam Factories study (Hutchings, 2016) related a lot of childhood stress to pressures in school including raised academic expectations, increased testing and a narrowed curriculum focused on core subjects. Sahlberg (2012) identified these issues as symptomatic of a spreading global education reform movement, incorporating the factors identified within Hutchings report.

Palmer (2007), through presenting a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research, went further to reveal damaging influences within modern society. Issues highlighted here included: lack

of play and decreasing socialisation; junk food and unhealthy lifestyles; working parents and childcare; divorce and blended families; overuse of technology; pressures of marketing and excessive consumerism. While this book is dated, it still feels relevant today and factors may now include increased online gaming and dangers of social media.

## **My Background**

My position as health and wellbeing co-ordinator gave me a personal interest in the emotional health and well-being of children. I have a particular affinity with mindfulness as I practice it regularly and continue to feel the benefits. My three children have experienced the Paws b programme within their own primary school. They all expressed enjoyment of the lessons and I often see them apply what they have learnt to everyday events with increasing calmness, clarity and understanding. When discussing mindfulness with teachers and parents in my children's school community it appeared to be highly valued and encouraged.

As with Atkins and Duckworth (2019) my personal experiences motivated me to start this challenging journey promoting socially just studies. I also considered Kushner (2014a) and his rationale for grounding a case study in the experiences of practitioners to shape evaluations around their issues and dilemmas. I am thus both practitioner and evaluator. The following information has been included to illuminate my preconception, biases and considerations through which my own and other participants' experiences have been interpreted.

Working as a full-time teacher and raising a young family are both time-consuming and demanding, however my own feelings of injustice made me search for a platform from which to be acknowledged and make a positive difference within my school. I wished to draw attention to a wider educational system that I felt was unfair and ineffective on many levels. I had been teaching for over 20 years, co-ordinated a variety of subject areas and gained an Open University Master of Arts in Education degree. At the time of amalgamation, I held a middle management position and subject co-ordinator roles for physical education and personal, social and health education. Overall responsibility for whole school health and wellbeing strategies included achieving ongoing Healthy School (2001-present) and Active School status (2001-2011). I was also the workplace trade union representative.

My previous head had been personable and flexible but suffered criticism for not supporting the rising demands for accountability. While a satisfactory judgement was procured in the last OFSTED inspection, falling SAT scores indicated that the school was in decline. The head teacher appointed to the amalgamated primary school brought new systems of management and a restructured senior leadership team in an effort to raise standards swiftly in teaching and learning. My health and wellbeing responsibilities quickly vanished with refocused priorities for core curriculum improvement and I began to investigate new opportunities for professional development.

For various reasons I had become disenfranchised and disillusioned. Academic studies offered me new challenges and I began to feel increasingly optimistic. I tentatively approached my head teacher with the suggestion of introducing mindfulness. This was a bold move as new initiatives appeared to only come from senior leadership. Management theory (Ball 1995), seen as a common feature in many schools, illustrates the assumption that educational problems can be fixed by technical means laid down by management. As my school was clearly focused on measurable outcomes, I was concerned that the introductory phase of mindfulness would be perceived as too nebulous. This initiative would need perseverance, ongoing commitment and considerable diplomacy.

Grassroots ideas could have been considered a threat to conformity, but the head teacher was supportive, communicating a particular interest in developing her own understanding and application of mindfulness. Concerns were expressed about additional lessons in light of pressures and time constraints of covering the existing school curriculum. It was, however, agreed that the school would fund a mindfulness adult foundation course to develop my personal practice, and I completed the subsequent Paws b facilitator training in July 2017.

The head teacher gave consent for the evaluation project but the chair of governors expressed unease. As a university lecturer and doctoral supervisor, I believed that he would offer encouragement for this investigation. His observations were based on a positivist standpoint but I was not given the opportunity to defend my paradigm and methods. While this experience dampened my confidence, it highlighted some useful considerations. I recognised the need to justify my position, especially for those who see the purpose and means of research in very different ways. I began to contemplate the importance of effective dialogue. Collaborative, fluid communication is integral for someone to recognise and respect a potentially opposing viewpoint. I knew my writing needed to be strong to justify my decisions. Well-chosen description and evidence would require

the reader to step into the process, to understand a perspective that could be very different from their own experiences and beliefs.

Once my facilitator training was completed, I was asked by the head teacher to present two staff sessions for introducing mindfulness and developing personal strategies. This gave me opportunities to explore the content of the Paws b programme and share with staff my plans to evaluate the lessons with Key Stage 2 classes. My situation within the school seemed to be changing and my relationship with the head teacher began to improve. The concepts of cooperation and support from others are themes that run throughout this investigation and relate very much to my personal position. The inspiring influence of the head teacher throughout this evaluation will be illustrated further on. I was initially attracted to critical theory through my perceived feelings of separation in relation to school management decision making. I am now experiencing the benefits of social justice principles such as discourse, collaboration, negotiation and being part of a shared vision for making positive changes that benefit everyone.

## **Evaluation Purpose and Questions**

My reading identified two perspectives for mindfulness in education in terms of relevance to my evaluation questions. The dominant position related to mindfulness as a therapeutic tool, to improve attention and decrease negative behaviours. This would provide a potential application for improved academic learning. Quantitative studies hope to prove success through measurable outcomes but few quantitative studies illustrate teachers' and children's perspectives of mindfulness as a process. I also found increasing criticism against mindfulness in schools regarding its overriding focus on perceiving and attempting to address problems originating from individual attitudes and behaviours. Critical scholars upholding the other perspective, based on Buddhist origins, identify issues relating to potential misuse within neo-liberal, consumerist societies (e.g., Forbes, 2018). Secular programmes can be viewed to lack principled applications for the benefit of whole communities. They are seen to make unrealistic promises to improve many conditions including anxiety, pain management and addictive behaviours through a matter of weeks. Purser and Loy (2013) liken modern, secular mindfulness to fast food, coining the phrase 'McMindfulness'. For my investigation, changes in children's behaviours would still need to be considered and evaluated in line with school expectations. Nevertheless, my primary purpose was to evaluate whether the children would learn to be both mindful of themselves and mindful of their roles within society.

This study was originally inspired by my own children's positive experiences of mindfulness within their primary school. My initial plans were to evaluate mindfulness in my children's school to investigate perceived benefits and identify reasons for successful implementation. I was then hoping to use this information to initiate an action research project. I wanted to observe lessons, led by an experienced facilitator, and then present them within my own school. The study would investigate different stages of each school's experience to support our own implementation. Due to time restrictions and issues with planning investigations in two schools I decided to conduct a pilot and main study within my school alone. My children's school use the Paws b curriculum and after undergoing training I decided this programme would be the focus of evaluation rather than an action research project.

I continued to reflect on secular mindfulness offering individuals a set of tools for stress management, resilience and increased productivity. The Paws b programme could be seen to fit neatly within this perspective but I wondered if closer analysis would reflect this. I saw evaluation as meaningful activity for both the school and the mindfulness in school's movement. My findings could add to other investigations of the same programme, such as the work by Thomas and Aitkinson (2017) and Vickery and Dorjee (2015). I wanted to conduct a qualitative study that was underpinned by a more holistic perspective. Literature on Buddhism, mindfulness and spirituality in education began to illuminate other qualities and potential benefits of mindfulness. Further reading on mindfulness displayed strong links between qualitative studies, spiritual development, wellbeing and critical theory principles that aim to increase equity for all. Current debates rest on whether mindfulness is a strategy promoting coping mechanisms for individuals or a potential instrument for positive, societal change if communities embrace practice in conjunction with virtues and values. Most importantly I wanted to give children and teaching assistants a voice as I had previously felt overlooked and ignored. Democratic evaluation (Kushner, 2017) would be a powerful tool for such a purpose.

The pilot study (six lessons conducted with a Year 3 class) gave me initial experience of teaching Paws b and allowed me to trial specific evaluation methods in obtaining and analysing adult perceptions. Mindfulness is often described as an inner experience which needs personal perspectives to be fully understood. Observing children in these lessons was important when investigating views from staff but I found that what was sometimes interpreted by an observer was not always reflected by certain children. An example of this was a particular boy who had appeared disinterested during the lessons yet expressed an enjoyment and ongoing commitment to



mindfulness activities throughout that year. I was, however, able to identify workable themes within the data, reflect on further work required for the design, and recognise potential programme changes to increase future effectiveness. Most importantly I had noted the importance of gathering children's opinions for inclusion in the evaluation process.

This present study continued to evaluate the curriculum initiative in its second year. I was finally able to explore both adult and child perspectives in terms of content, methods, expectations and potential progress. Two evaluation questions reflected these aims by asking to what extent the programme could be deemed successful and identifying suggestions for programme development and change. I began to view social justice (Atkins and Duckworth, 2019; Griffiths, 1998) as an alternative, moral perspective for mindfulness in education. Its principles felt more pragmatic while still promoting change towards a fairer, democratic society. Greater emphasis on the individual and negotiation with the group resonated more in aiding acceptance and application, especially within fluid and complex social structures. Justice always requires fairness but not always equality. Potential possibilities called for an additional question relating to the extent children had engaged with social justice principles through the programme.

## **Thesis Overview**

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature on mindfulness and mindfulness in education research from the positions of secular-therapeutic and religious-spirituality alongside identified issues. I explore an alternative social justice perspective then define mindfulness in both purpose and process by using this literature. Following on from this, my qualitative methodology will be discussed, within Chapter 3, in light of social justice; benefits of evaluator mindfulness; use of pupil voice; democratic evaluative design and thematic data analysis. A description of my methods is found in Chapter 4, illustrating changes made in response to participant needs, my reflexivity and ongoing data analysis. Chapters 5 and 6 present data, combined with analysis, for each question. Discussion of the data and analysis is found in Chapter 7, together with additional literature drawn from my experiences as mindfulness facilitator and new topics raised by the children. I will then look at the strengths and limitations of this investigation while summarising my discoveries. Chapter 8 presents my conclusions along with recommendations for the school, the Paws b programme and further qualitative studies to develop social justice as a new perspective for mindfulness in schools.

## **Chapter 2 Literature review**

### **Introduction**

Mindfulness appears to be growing at a rapid rate across educational settings, but Albrecht et al. (2018) state that research is failing to keep pace with practical implementations for school programmes. This review investigates issues in transferring secular-therapeutic and religious-spiritual positions on mindfulness into education systems along with theories that underpin these different applications. Critical scholars have yet to offer an alternative, moral-based framework for effective movement into primary school but social justice may show a potential perspective. A clear definition of mindfulness and investigations of pedagogy are needed to achieve a more holistic evaluation of my school programme. Papers outside of the topic of mindfulness are addressed to explore how effective teaching and learning could be recognised, particularly in relation to social and emotional education.

### **Literature Search**

My initial literature search began with The Mindfulness in Schools website where I found Weare's (2013) summary of research up to 2012 relating to mindfulness and children but qualitative investigations were not included. On the MiSP website (2015) the only paper relating to Paws b was a quantitative study focused on measuring attention and meta-cognition. I began to explore Google, Google Scholar, Academia and the Open University library. Search terms used included Mindfulness AND children AND qualitative studies, Mindfulness AND the classroom, Mindfulness AND primary school, Mindfulness AND child's perspective, teacher perspective.

Ager et al. (2015) was the first paper found and listed four other qualitative/mixed method studies investigating primary age pupil perspectives (Carelse, 2013, Coholic, 2011, Smith, 2010, Cruchon, 2009) with an additional paper exploring both teacher and pupil perspectives (Rix and Bernay, 2014). Academia and Research Gate identified other qualitative studies. Thomas and Aitkinson (2017) referenced Campion and Rocco (2009) as a major qualitative study which alerted me to the need for searches to include meditation and contemplative practice, as some papers used such terms. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2014) was commonly used in these studies so I began to read papers relating to this.

My interest in the spiritual concepts of mindfulness led to searches involving spirituality, mindfulness and education. Authors such as De Souza (2006) and Eaude (2009) were identified. Papers by Hyland (2017, 2016, 2015, 2013) and Ergas (2019, 2015, 2014, 2013) illuminated critical perspectives of mindfulness from Buddhist and spiritual perspectives. This led me to investigate neo-liberalism, commercialism (Forbes, 2019) and the concept of McMindfulness (Purser, 2019; Purser and Loy, 2013).

A new secular perspective for mindfulness in education, with focus on moral application, came from my methodological literature search. Critical theory resonated with my ontology and epistemology, but some sources were dated and certain concepts appeared too radical for current educational contexts. Reading through criticisms of critical theory and post-structural developments (Kellner, 2003), eventually led to social justice and democratic education. Theories of Dewey (1938) are still referred to in terms of democracy in education (Hyde and La Prad, 2015) and link well with social justice principles. This has now developed my alternative perspective for mindfulness in education. The social justice concept of negotiation between the individual and collective made me revisit studies on pro-social behaviours. I became aware of the psychological concept of social mindfulness, which linked scientific studies to connection with others. Theories on eudaimonic wellbeing (Seligman, 2002) aided my understanding of what a moral framework for mindfulness could involve.

Evaluating from a teacher's perspective encouraged me to investigate effective pedagogy with links to mindfulness and social-emotional learning. After teaching the programme, I became aware that the role of the mindful facilitator was another area of literature that warranted investigation. Other topics identified by the children included boredom, making mistakes and creative mindfulness activities. Papers initially dismissed due to their inclusion of activities alongside mindfulness, such as art (Coholic, 2011) and yoga (Cruchon, 2009), were again considered to be of possible relevance to my evaluation questions. Concepts illuminated through data analysis will be explored within later chapters.

In addition to scholarly literature, I have utilised magazines (e.g., Mindful online publication) and newspaper articles that support established theories and resonate with my findings. Research investigations cited, however, have met quality standards as either a thesis or through refereed journal publications.

## Mindfulness and the Secular-Therapeutic Perspective

A commonly quoted definition of contemporary mindfulness is 'the awareness that emerges through paying close attention on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgementally' (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 45). I have briefly explored mindfulness' origins as a secularised construct to illustrate its current scientific justification, the dominant position of mindfulness research, and how my own investigation had a different focus. Mindfulness came to scientific communities in the USA through John Kabat-Zinn (1992), a doctor of molecular biology. He had found personal benefits in practising Zen meditation, but recognised that a Buddhist framing was likely to prevent widespread acceptance in Western culture (Forbes, 2019). The practice became a treatment for mental and physical illness within clinical contexts and introduced to the UK, by Williams et al. (2002), as cognitive therapy for depression. These pioneers of modern mindfulness were medical professionals, scientific in approach and justification. Mindfulness, now a series of taught techniques, became an intervention which placed responsibility on the individual.

Framing mindfulness as a tool to reduce stress offered economic benefits for improving productivity and ameliorating burnout (Ergas, 2019). Once again, mindfulness was referred to as an intervention with economic logic built in. A recent UK study (Health and Safety Executive, 2019) showed that work-related anxiety and depression represented significant health conditions, most prevalent in public service industries, including education. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) suggested that mindfulness could help teachers recognise and regulate stress reactions. Jennings et al., (2013) later made claims that reducing teacher burnout would reduce financial costs related to absenteeism, staff turnover and health care. This concept of mindfulness as a potential solution to teacher stress was a significant factor for my head teacher's initial interest and, as such, supported the introduction of mindfulness into our school.

The evaluation of mindfulness programmes for economic benefit encourages short term implementation, aiming to test efficacy and cost-effectiveness. This logic is captured clearly in the school study titled 'The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a mindfulness training programme in schools compared with normal school provision' (Oxford Mindfulness Centre, 2016). The economic orientation encourages evaluators to seek the correct dosage of practice (Davidson et al., 2012) to minimise time and expenses. As funding is an ongoing concern, my school needed to carefully consider cost. An evaluation that could justify investment by quickly showing visible benefits would surely be met with school interest, although this would differ from my own, personal beliefs. The

question of how to define and evaluate benefits will be explored further on in this review. An evaluator's role, I will argue, also demands the need to recognise different viewpoints and priorities.

Neuroscience began to demonstrate that mindfulness practice was able to yield physical effects on the brain. Through brain imaging technology scientists could now observe the structure and function of different parts of the brain (Simon, 2008). Tang et. al, (2015) illustrated emerging evidence that mindfulness meditation could cause possible changes in the structure and function of the brain regions involving emotional regulation, attention and self-awareness. While this sort of evidence was neither feasible nor appropriate for my study, parts of the brain and the concept of neuroplasticity were investigated in relation to the programme's content.

Psychologists added to this body of research through studies in rumination, attention span, working memory and executive function (Davidson et al., 2012), domains that were quickly applied to education (Ergas, 2014). The Mindful Nation UK report (MAPPG 2015), commissioned by the Mindfulness All Party Parliamentary group, included a review of scientific evidence and public policy recommendations, which covered the roles of mindfulness in all public sector areas including education. Within the forward Kabat-Zinn gave a brief explanation of mindfulness and, while he continued to make reference to Buddhist origins, stressed its distinction from religion. Within this document he stated the strong belief that scientific research was the main contributor for the emergence of mindfulness in many areas of society.

The majority of research for mindfulness in education has focused on secondary school, quantitative, outcome-based studies. Questionnaires and inventories have been used to investigate changing levels of attention, anxiety and meta-cognition, reflecting the current expansion of investigations within neurology, psychology and cognition (Ergas, 2013). Increasing numbers of random controlled trials, include active control groups, longer time frames and larger sample sizes (Kuyken et al., 2017). The MYRIAD project (Oxford Mindfulness Centre, 2016) analysed pupil and teacher questionnaires from 84 secondary schools over a three-year period. Literature reviews, such as Weare (2013), and systematic reviews, such as Maynard (2017), were seen to allow synthesis and greater cohesion within the studies dominating mindfulness in school's research. These papers did not feature qualitative evidence in their reports, although brief comments had previously been made highlighting the need for supplementary qualitative evidence (Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Greenberg and Harris, 2011).

Last year (2019) the government announced the launch of a mental health trial, claiming to be one of the largest of its kind in the world. This is being led by the Anna Freud National Centre in partnership with University College London (Barr, 2019). Three hundred and seventy primary and secondary schools, over two years, are taking part in the INSPIRE trial, involving relaxation, protective behaviours and mindfulness activities. The mindfulness-based skills group receive five minutes of daily instruction from trained facilitators (Anna Freud Centre, 2019). Participants complete pupil and staff surveys. This study's aims and methodology highlight the current emphasis on large, quantitative projects to evaluate mindfulness in education. As my investigation planned to supply an alternative focus for evaluating potential benefits, I was concerned that findings would not be recognised or valued by the school if the views of senior leadership reflected popular beliefs in the wider research community.

Current evaluations rely heavily on pre and post-tests over a fixed intervention period, however issues in using quantitative measures have been highlighted (Hyland, 2016). Studies focus on specific areas of cognition, social and emotional skills and wellbeing. Outcome-based measures, such as attention scores and stress tests, are used to quantify changes before and after a mindfulness programme. Hyland discussed how constructed measurements only measure specific aspects of mindfulness, such as the capacity to stay present, length of attention span and current emotional state. The specific focus of such a study could be seen, by some, to present a false perspective of what mindfulness is. There are at least nine questionnaires that claim to define and measure mindfulness, but there is no standard measure to evaluate such research tools (Flores, 2015). It is difficult for quantitative research to classify and establish causal correspondence between mindful practice and results, while obtaining the validity that science demands (Walsh, 2016). Kabat-Zinn (2005) also contributed to the confusion of what mindfulness is by defining it as a way of being and not a technique. I wondered how a way of being could be classified into groups, subgroups and measures, as quantitative researchers aim to do. A qualitative study, such as mine, creates opportunities for a more holistic, contextual description of mindfulness, illustrating changing circumstances, attitudes and developments from those experiencing a programme.

Literature from psychology has been included. Some studies investigate individual perspectives on the outer world while others consider social groupings and social action. Both concepts have particular significance in relation to my investigation. Lipton (2005) described the benefits of mindfulness by illustrating how thoughts have the power to change reality. He saw the conscious and sub conscious mind as separate yet able to work together. The subconscious contains

programmes, established early in life, and built upon through habitation. Important information, such as learning to walk, is stored here and needs to be resistant to change. The conscious mind is creative and open to learning. It has the ability to change in relation to an awareness of the outer world, however once absorbed in thinking the subconscious mind takes over. Lipton claimed that most of our lives are run by these subconscious programmes, making negative beliefs difficult to change. He believed that mindfulness allows the conscious thinking mind to quieten and recognise subconscious programmes created by past experiences, thus reshaping perceived realities. This process will be explored further in this review (see page 18) as there are strong links with Buddhist principles. However, the emphasis is on the individual to change their inner perspective as opposed to their external contexts. As such Lipton's concept resonates with mindfulness as a functional tool within the therapeutic perspective. It is interesting to note that Lipton began his career as a stem cell biologist and is now regarded by many as an internationally recognised figure in studies aiming to bridge the gap between science and spirituality.

Some psychological mindfulness studies investigated how individuals can benefit from greater connection with social groups to gain support and reduce stress. This will be a significant concept related to my findings. Rutstein (2019) gave a scientific view that suffering is caused by the state of the nervous system. The survival response he drew upon related to the social engagement system, which primes an individual to connect and communicate with others. Rutstein viewed connection with others as enhancing the ability to access a wider range of coping mechanisms rather than fight, flight or freeze reactions. He advocated mindfulness to help activate the social engagement system. This theory primarily focused on individual benefits, rather than altruistic aims. Nonetheless, I believe that developing positive social relationships may stimulate compassion towards others.

Positive psychology offers a very interesting concept, in relation to morality and altruism, called eudaimonic wellbeing. Martin Seligman (2002), the person behind this movement, distinguished between a pleasant life and meaningful life in an attempt to define wellbeing. A meaningful life, for Seligman, was about using personal strengths in the service of something greater than the individual and was termed eudaimonic wellbeing. This is in opposition to hedonistic wellbeing, a type of happiness related to short lived pleasures, such as partying and fun, which can lead to dangers of excess and unfulfillment. Eudaimonic wellbeing illustrates connection between the wellbeing of the individual and the wellbeing of others, without discounting self-care or healthy personal boundaries. Pleasurable feelings and increased self-esteem are experienced when embarking on activities in the

service of others. This theory will be explored further (see page 34) when interconnection and social justice are proposed as a potential perspective for secular, moral mindfulness.

Both Lipton (2005) and Rutstein (2019) proposed techniques without a set period in which to complete a structured programme. One could see these theories as encouraging a way of being, more in line with the religious-spiritual perspective. Leonard (2019), however, offered a six-week study called social mindfulness. The main ideas were based on cognitive psychology and modern secular mindfulness, with concepts similar to Rustein. Leonard advocated increasing a sense of relatedness with a group to create feelings of safety and reduce symptoms of stress. Leonard applied mindfulness to the process of rewriting our personal narratives, thus echoing Lipton (2005), but also saw mindfulness as aiding a social process that influences how communication and co-operation is developed. This breaks the illusion of the separate self and increases our power to become agents of change. While this resonated with my focus on social justice, connection and the development of eudaimonic wellbeing (Seligman, 2002) it also sits well within the secular-therapeutic perspective and was written specifically for the context of the adult workplace.

Monteiro (2017) writes as a psychologist and practising Buddhist. Through exploring secular interventions, she now trains other psychologists in using mindfulness as a therapy. Monteiro illustrated confidence that Buddhist values could be translated into secular-therapeutic programmes with sensitivity and care. Important domains included how the facilitator is initially trained and the sensitivity needed to translate Buddhist concepts to others who may not feel comfortable with their origins. This paper illustrated the impact of facilitator training, beliefs and delivery when establishing moral aims within a secular mindfulness-based tool. This paper was of particular interest to my evaluation in relation to the importance of the mindfulness facilitator's role.

I have included examples of qualitative papers, written by psychologists, that helped shape my aims and methods. Cain (2012) conducted a study in the UK to investigate children's perspectives of mindfulness, primarily for reducing stress. As a clinical psychologist she viewed mindfulness as a potential intervention for developing resilience. Children took part in ten-minute meditations, facilitated by the researcher over the short period of nine days, and were then interviewed separately or in groups. The researcher kept a journal to display her personal impact on perceived results. While the group of 19 children was considered large, the author was aware of limitations in relation to some pupils having difficulties in expressing themselves verbally. This raised initial concerns related to the use of dialogic methods within my study, which I took into consideration.



Cain's qualitative study falls within the therapeutic perspective as mindfulness is viewed as a short-term intervention to support children suffering from anxiety. Evaluations related to effectiveness were based on Cain's personal views and those of the children at the end of the intervention period but also illuminated, to a certain extent, the process of the programme through a journal. The use of a personal journal presented itself as an effective evaluation tool for investigating ongoing processes and developments within a programme, and I also adopted this tool.

Carelse (2013) is an educational psychologist who investigated pictorial and written narratives of six children identified with mild attention deficit disorders. The focus of study was on improving levels of attention through mindfulness. Children were interviewed at the beginning and end of the programme but also recorded their experiences in words and pictures after each session. Even though this research focused on attention levels, to improve concentration and sitting still, results also showed aspects of improved wellbeing and social competencies. A mindfulness measure scale was included to quantify changes. Issues using scales have been explored previously (Hyland, 2016). Carelse's research can be seen as another secular-therapeutic study of an intervention focused on particular children chosen by the researcher, however annotated pictures from the children were able to illuminate interesting personal experiences and reflections on emergent mindfulness. Both these studies identified participants seen to require assistance and aimed to evaluate how far mindfulness could help within these areas. I wanted my evaluation to look at a wider range of benefits through a whole class programme, to empower all children rather than those viewed as needing particular support.

An interesting study by Beitel et al. (2005) investigated relationships between mindfulness, the awareness of self and others. These are areas that will come under focus during my evaluation. The term psychological mindedness is used for the disposition to reflect on behaviour, thoughts and feelings of oneself and others. The researchers saw this as directly related to mindfulness but also involving synthesizing, pattern spotting and attentional capacity. Mindfulness was viewed as necessary but not sufficient as additional opportunities were needed for development. While this paper was mostly concerned with investigating and comparing psychological measures for the attention to self (self-consciousness) and others (empathy), it gave guidance on the cognitive and affective components of empathy with links to mindfulness practice. Perspective taking allows a person to understand the psychological view of others and empathetic concern relates to sympathy and care for those considered unfortunate. There also seems to be a combination of recognising similarities and differences in oneself and others. These definitions all require that one must pay

attention to others to demonstrate care and, as such, supplied useful references for evaluating a mindfulness programme that may promote qualities such as empathy and compassion. This study was also of relevance to my evaluation when mindfulness and social-emotional learning were defined, explored and evaluated during my analysis.

The role of mindfulness in facilitating perspective-taking and empathetic concern had been explored by Block-Lerner et al. (2007) in relation to family therapy, but could be applied to educational contexts. The practice of non-judgemental, present-moment awareness of one's own emotions appeared to facilitate aspects of empathic responding. Greater awareness of feelings may aid someone to anticipate experiences that could promote particular emotions. This would also develop capacity for understanding the feeling states of others. Present-moment awareness could additionally reduce story telling tendencies in the mind, created by past events or future worries, and reduce heated interpersonal moments. This was another reference showing greater personal awareness aiding relationships with others. Simpson (2017) accused the secular-therapeutic perspective of encouraging narcissistic self-absorption but these studies show that attention progressively shifts from self to others. This may encourage eudaimonic wellbeing and support social justice principles beyond the individual. These were important factors to consider when evaluating a mindfulness programme in terms of its potential to encourage personal virtues and communal equity.

Van Doesum et al. (2013) presented another paper that may come close to bridging the gap between supporting the individual and encouraging compassion for others through the development of eudaimonic wellbeing. They examined four scientific studies within positive psychology which investigated active prosocial behaviour. This involved anticipating the needs of others by proactively shaping situations to benefit others. Being socially mindful is simply recognizing the needs and wishes that other people may have in the present moment. This increases perspective taking, promotes empathy and cooperation while also increasing individual wellbeing. Van Doesum et al. primarily focused on measurement and correlations between specific behaviours and did not address how to promote social mindfulness or activities that could be translated to the classroom. However, this work supports Leonard (2019) and was another interesting theory to draw upon when evaluating the educational mindfulness programme.

## Mindfulness and the Religious-Spiritual Perspective

The original narrative for mindfulness was created around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Ergas, 2019) and is part of a broad Buddhist path towards the liberation of suffering. Embedded in a strong, moral position, Buddhist concepts stress qualities such as compassion and wisdom (Hyland, 2013). Burns (2017) saw the mind as the basis for Buddhism. According to Buddhist teaching, described by the Soka Gakkai International Buddhist organisation (SGI, 2017), there are nine layers of consciousness that operate together to create our lives. The first five relate to our senses which lead to the sixth layer of thought. The seventh layer holds inner perception, creating self-identity and conscience. The eighth layer transcends the boundaries of an individual by containing eternal life force and karma, while the ninth represents the true eternal self. It is said that there are deep seated illusions within the seventh layer, regarding the ego, which can hinder an individual's transcendence. Both Buddhism and Lipton (2005) identified the process of mindfulness as recognising emotions and integrating different levels of mind, to free individuals from habitual thinking and actions that cause suffering to themselves and others. Understanding similarities in theories that define the process and benefits of mindfulness aided my evaluation of the school's programme.

Acceptance of suffering is a fundamental Buddhist principle. According to the Soka Gakkai organisation (SGI, 2017) the inability to accept change causes suffering. They explained that non-attachment to transient worldly things, including judgements, allows liberation from suffering. They went on to illustrate that while it is impossible to live without attachment, ultimate freedom is experienced when the energy of attachment is channelled into compassion and action for others. How the mindfulness programme dealt with distressing memories and uncomfortable emotions provoked during lessons will be explored within the data (see page 92).

I have focused on the Buddhist fundamentals of present- centred awareness which also hold prominence within the secular-therapeutic perspective (Kabat- Zinn 2005). There are, however, other aspects that require clarification when evaluating an education programme that could uphold moral purposes. Dreyfus (2011) illustrated that mindfulness can be explicitly evaluative, differing from the modern emphasis on non-judgement. The secular-therapeutic mindfulness perspective could be in danger of being regarded as passive and accepting, as opposed to promoting awareness of personal choice and empowerment. Bodhi (2011) expanded on Dreyfus' definition by explaining that mindfulness can facilitate both serenity and insight. This can lead to either deep concentration and non-judgement or evaluation and wisdom in making principled choices. These two applications

of mindfulness were particularly important when my study data explored the functions of the mindfulness facilitator within the programme.

Buddhism could offer a moral perspective for mindfulness programmes but, while Buddhists view this as a philosophy, issues may arise when Buddhism is perceived to be a religion. Local educational authorities must ensure that the main religious traditions, including Buddhism viewed as the World's fifth largest faith (Hackett and McClendon, 2017), are reflected within a school's syllabus. Emphasis and topic choice, however, depends on each school and may even come down to individual teacher beliefs. In terms of mindfulness within schools in the UK, the general consensus, according to Halliwell (2020), is that mindfulness is framed as a psychology rather than a religion. He refers to the science of mindfulness capturing educators' interests. The lack of educational studies featuring Buddhist mindfulness in secular schools may display difficulties in transference and potential resistance. There was a case in the USA (Gajanan, 2016) where parents expressed strong concerns that practices such as yoga and mindfulness were indoctrinating children with Hinduism. In Ireland (Bartley, 2019) a Roman Catholic bishop requested that schools in his diocese ban yoga and mindfulness, expressing similar concerns.

Smith (2010) is the only study to date that I have found to include Buddhist mindfulness in schools. The context was very specific and related to analysis of a Buddhist education programme, which also included storytelling, plays, mindful movement and visualisations. Smith co-ordinated the Australian programme which included 10 primary schools. Data gathered over two years focused on understanding and interpreting teacher, pupil and parent perceptions. I had originally intended to investigate parent views within my evaluation. This was not possible through lack of volunteers, although I have drawn on some comments from one parent. As Smith's programme featured other activities it was difficult to extract results related to mindfulness alone. Pupils used a happiness scale before and after sessions. I noted the significance of pupils being asked for feedback immediately after sessions to help accurately investigate views and applied this, as much as was possible, to my own data collection. While quantitative analysis showed little positive change in happiness, the workbook entries displayed perceptual shifts in attention. Smith believed that even negative scale recordings showed greater engagement in cultivating sustained awareness through recognising and accepting both positive and negative emotions. This reflected Buddhist beliefs about recognition and acceptance of suffering and, as stated previously, exploring negative emotions was investigated within my study data to evaluate the effect of such activity.

Smith (2010) illustrated how an evaluation of a Buddhist school programme strongly indicated children's enhanced ability to maintain wellbeing and be socially engaged. It was interesting to see how Smith attributed successes to a community of educators and not just programme materials. She stated that the activities were framed with wisdom and kindness and explicitly referred to them as democratic pursuits, accessible to all educators. There are implications that Buddhism was not the ultimate, driving force within this programme and qualities could be transferred to more secular pursuits. This is an important consideration that was explored within my evaluation when identifying opportunities for kindness and social engagement. Smith also highlighted the impact of the facilitators on perceived benefits, also a major factor within my study.

I have included literature that refers to spirituality to cover practices and research that are not part of Buddhist tradition. Spiritual practices in this sense are activities that induce inner, personal growth and cultivation, although I have also drawn on references to other religions and cultures. Mindfulness can be defined as a universal human experience, shared by everyone regardless of religion (Solace Asia, 2016). De Souza (2006) recognised the increasing interest in spirituality as a reaction to the materialistic values of current western society, and its potential within education for nurturing children's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

De Souza (2006), saw spiritual education enhancing understanding of the relational dimension of being, including connection to self and others, developing purpose for one's existence. She proposed activities that engaged the inner and outer lives of students, advocating the need to balance movement and stillness, social interaction and stillness. This builds on Wright (2000) who had previously discussed the importance of inner experiences connecting to the outer world. Myers (2004) supported the view of connection in all levels of consciousness, describing how, when a person learns both consciously and unconsciously, the mind becomes integrated and deep cognitive activation occurs. These authors illustrated how spirituality should recognise both independence and interdependence while keeping a sense of perspective. This displays concepts of morality and developing compassion, resonating strongly with Buddhist principles and mindfulness practice. Whether connection is within the individual, with others, to optimise learning or for personal spiritual development, this is an important theme that will be addressed throughout my evaluation.

Other similarities between spirituality and mindfulness literature included awareness, a strong theme that runs through the development of children's spirituality when illustrated by Hay and Nye (2006). Within the concept of 'relational consciousness' (p. 109) Nye categorised four elements

including awareness of self, other people, the environment and, for some, a transcendent other. Burdick's (2014) progression of mindfulness skills began with the awareness of surroundings, awareness of breath, awareness of the senses, awareness of mind, awareness of others to awareness of everything. While the themes with Hay and Nye (2006) were the same, Burdick (2014) saw attention to the external environment as being a starting point, leading to experience of the body and finally attention to the mind. Within the mind thoughts and feelings relate closely to one another. This process, for Burdick, was cyclical rather than linear, repeated on a regular basis to develop connection between the inner and outer world. Once again, the importance of connection was referred to.

In terms of awareness of negative emotions Eade (2009) saw the need for children to make sense of difficult issues such as suffering and loss. He recognised that this could be particularly challenging for adults who wish to protect children but believed that accepting painful emotions is important for developing resilience. Claxton (2012) highlighted the importance of resilience, reflectiveness, reciprocity and resourcefulness for increasing agency and reducing over-reliance on adults. This echoed the Buddhist concept of the recognition and acceptance of suffering also related to concepts of empowerment, to be introduced later in this review. Reciprocity will also be another major theme for my findings. Comparisons between mindfulness and spirituality have been explored here to help identify potential benefits that may be recognised within my evaluation of the school programme.

While this literature illuminates the importance of addressing spirituality within education, issues arise to how and when spirituality should be taught in school. Buddhism can be part of a programme of study; however Wright (2000) explored the struggle for spiritual integration within the current curriculum. SMSC stands for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The government and OFSTED both state that all schools in England must show how well their pupils develop in this area (Young Citizens, 2020). According to the definition in the OFSTED handbook of 2019, SMSC has a strong overlap with Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) but encompasses personal development across the whole curriculum. The spiritual element, as described by OFSTED, includes reflection on personal beliefs, respect for different faiths, and the use of imagination and creativity when learning about oneself, others and the wider world. Some may relate this definition to much that can be seen within education. Others may find these concepts difficult to recognise and evaluate in the busy and varied activities of a normal school day. The spiritual aspect of schooling is inclusive and offers a model which seeks to be open and accommodating (Wright, 2000),

however definitions remain vague (Eaude, 2009). Carr (1995) described the integration of spiritual education throughout a school's curriculum as a challenging strategy to adopt. There appears to be much that educators can learn from the concept of developing spirituality in children, however time is needed to collaborate, discuss and reflect on what spirituality means for inclusion into day-to-day teaching (Eaude, 2009). The mindfulness programme under evaluation in my study may offer a tangible format in which these important elements can be presented while also reducing the need for consensus on how to integrate spirituality into the school curriculum.

As can be seen by the following examples, research into spiritual aspects of mindfulness has, so far, appeared to only investigate schools and communities that have a particular spiritual culture and ethos. Keating (2016) resonated with certain aspects of Smith's (2010) research. He used an interesting collection of methods to investigate spirituality and children's experiences of meditation, over two years, to explore children's experiences of a Christian meditation programme in Irish primary schools. The primary focus was on perceptions of spirituality but Keating did explore principles of finding one's true self, which could relate to the practice of non-judgemental, present moment awareness (Bishop, 2004). Forty-eight children, aged seven to 11, from three schools took part in interviews stimulated by visual and tactile props. Photo-elicitation and a selection box method with statements relating to meditation, self-awareness, personal transformation and awareness beyond the self were either chosen or dismissed by participants. Discussion with the researcher was promoted through these selections.

While I was intrigued by the use of these resources to promote discussion, I did not want to hinder or influence children's responses by photographs and statements created and chosen by me within my own study. Identified themes related to meditation included simplicity, serenity, self-awareness and heart awareness. It is important to note that these results were dependent on the context of Christian schools with established contemplative practice and, as such, identified meditation as a path rather than a scientific tool. Keating saw the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic elements included in the interview process achieving some rich metaphorical language from relatively young children. The development of metaphorical language for self-expression is something that will be explored through my own findings and analysis.

Another study within Catholic schools was Campion and Rocco's (2009) investigation of a year-long meditation programme in Australia. While this was identified as Christian meditation, the authors definition included the process of paying attention, often on particular objects as the focus of

concentration, thus showing similarities with mindful awareness. Fifty- four students, 19 teachers and seven parents from three elementary schools took part in individual and group interviews. Reported effects included increased relaxation, reduced stress, reduced anger and improved concentration, although feedback was not unequivocally positive. A significant result was that almost half the pupils reported using meditation outside of school for stress reduction. There were large differences in meditation practice and frequency across the schools. This depended on commitment from school leadership, how much training teachers received, teacher perceptions of benefits and levels of in school support. These were important considerations when evaluating my own school's introduction and development of mindfulness practice.

Australasia featured strongly in qualitative studies of mindfulness in education. Rix and Bernay (2014) collected teacher perspectives from five primary schools in New Zealand for evaluation of the programme in relation to increasing wellbeing. The eight-week mindfulness programme was developed by one of the researchers (Rix) incorporating a Maori model of holistic wellbeing and as such could be classed as a spiritual programme. Within this model physical health, spiritual health, family health and mental health were all interconnected for a person's wellbeing. Yet again, connection is a featured theme, as with other literature about spirituality reviewed here.

Rix and Bernay (2014) began their paper by stating that, while most studies in mindfulness are focused on fixing an individual or treating their symptoms, their research highlighted the positive wellbeing benefits for everyone. Six classroom teachers were asked to complete fortnightly journals. A follow up survey was conducted after three months to assess potential long-term effects. Themes from the data included pupil engagement, pupil attention, compassion towards self and others, and personal benefits for teachers through their own engagement in mindfulness. This was one of the first studies of mindfulness in schools I found to highlight both compassion for self and others. Teachers recognised that students were applying skills to everyday situations and were participating in home practice. Application of mindfulness outside the classroom was a significant factor for my own evaluation. Rix and Bernay noted that benefits of mindfulness practice resonated well with various aspects of the New Zealand Curriculum in addition to links with *hauora* (holistic wellbeing) from the Maori tradition also used in New Zealand schools. The culture in which their study occurred may have contributed positively to ongoing mindfulness activities within school and at home, and there is a sense in which my study sought to engage with this.



Mindfulness for Rix and Bernay (2014) was viewed as a path rather than a particular therapy for specific individuals. However, as with the Catholic school studies (Keating, 2016; Campion and Rocco, 2009), this was in conjunction with a predominant, established school culture. While Smith's study (2010) took place in ten state primary schools, it was part of a wider Australian movement that was developing an education programme which incorporated meditative techniques and principles rooted in Buddhism. It must be emphasised that my evaluation took place within a secular school setting without a religious or indigenous, cultural focus.

Another study that investigated pupil perspectives of mindfulness within primary schools was Ager et al. (2015). Thirty-eight primary age children from two schools took part in the Meditation Capsules mindfulness programme taught by the school counsellors and class teachers. Student journals were used, throughout the 10 weeks, to draw and write about experiences and feelings. Pupils were given time to complete journals during and immediately after the sessions. While the purpose of the research was to explore pupils' perceptions, the findings infer a level of programme evaluation. Data was classified under three themes of wellbeing, engagement and conflict resolution. This is another example of pupils giving feedback straight after every lesson allowing data to include ongoing responses throughout the programme. Findings were able to illustrate changes such as some pupils being initially resistant. I was left with questions regarding the effectiveness of methods and analysis. Written responses and pictures lacked opportunities for deeper probing of ideas. Analysis was also conducted by Ager, who had not been present during these sessions resulting in lost information on the contexts in which these lessons took place. While the use of thematic analysis was of great interest, I decided to utilise alternative methods such as observation and discussion to aid my data and analysis.

While Ager et al. (2015) used a programme that did not directly relate to an established, cultural modal, such as Rix and Bernay (2014), the authors referred to a wellness conceptual framework developed by Albrecht (Albrecht and Vell, 2014) which included seven dimensions for creative, cognitive, physical, spiritual, social, environmental and emotional wellness. This is an interesting study as the authors established their own holistic framework for the practice of mindfulness to develop within. All these authors had been involved in publishing mindfulness papers based around participant views that resonated with spiritual principles (Albrecht et al., 2018; Albrecht et al., 2012). They also showed how these eclectic concepts did have strong, but not exclusive, connections to Buddhist principles of mindfulness. Albrecht (2018, 2016) has additionally investigated mindfulness facilitator beliefs from a spiritual perspective. It should be noted that all this research is, at present,

only situated within Australia. This may show a research community and possibly wider system of schools ready to accept more spiritual and moral based concepts for education, illustrated by government literature promoting a holistic framework for wellbeing in schools (nsw.gov.au. 2015). My evaluation took place in a setting that I believed did not openly foster such values.

## **Criticisms of Current Perspectives**

The therapeutic focus of modern mindfulness has led to strong criticisms from some academics questioning what quantitative methods are proving and subsequently what is fostered within schools for future generations. This allows me to illustrate the wider context in which my evaluation of a secular, educational programme took place. It also highlights the importance of my qualitative methods and specific focus on identifying moral applications within the programme. Hyland (2016) gave a critical analysis of the Mindful Nation UK report (2015). He illustrated the problems emerging from quantitative-based research together with the de-contextualising of mindfulness from its original transformative process and ethical Buddhist roots. These appear to differ greatly from the aims of a secular educational programmes, seemingly implemented to aid specific areas such as cognition, behaviour and mental health. Ergas (2014) addressed emerging contemplative school practice being remoulded to allow for scientific justification. He saw the modern interpretations of mindfulness targeting concerns of educational policy makers and quantitative research resonating with the strong focus on assessing outcomes rather than the processes behind student learning. Ergas also identified evidence-based approaches as dissociating mindfulness from its conception as religious or spiritual, appealing to rationally and secularly inclined policy makers and parents who may become concerned with the perceived dangers of religious indoctrination.

A more spiritual approach to mindfulness was advocated by Hyland (2015). He saw current practices divorcing technique from their foundations, as mindfulness becomes a quick fix and not sustained, deepening, contemplative practice as viewed within Buddhism. Hyland recognised the core transformational function being co-opted in education for the purpose of achieving specific operational objectives, such as enhanced self-control and improved attention span. This moves mindfulness away from moral principles and holistic wellbeing. Even Williams and Kabat-Zinn (2013), the founding fathers of secular mindfulness, observed that Buddhist scholars may recognise the exploitation of mindfulness as threatening its deep meaning and potential value.

To address views on the perceived purposes of mindfulness in western cultures I will now focus on the current debate regarding its potential as a tool for change and empowerment. For this I will

investigate criticisms around neo-liberalism and commercialism. Kabat- Zinn (2005) claimed that mindfulness has universal benefits, irrespective of its packaging, and will naturally produce ethical outcomes. Critics see this view overstating the power of mindfulness while understating the power of capitalist ideology. The semiotics of mindfulness can reflect particular ideologies and associated values (Walsh, 2016). Using mindfulness in schools, the military or marketing it to stock traders may focus on a variety of benefits such as increased attention, improved meta-cognition, promotion of care giving, sensitivity to injustices or a drive for production and profit. Nevertheless, Wallis (2014) argued strongly for mindfulness to be presented alongside guidelines that ensure social integrity.

Criticisms of contemporary mindfulness can be categorised by those who deconstruct modern mindfulness by employing traditional Buddhist perspectives, and those who see it as a corporate function for capital gain and neoliberal advancement (Walsh, 2016). Some critics (Brackett and Rivers, 2014) identified current trends in corporate mindfulness as a cost-effective way to increase productivity in a workforce. Mindfulness as a self-help strategy to combat stress and mental health issues implies that fault lies with the individual and not society. Others, such as Bodhi (2011), saw mindfulness shifting from religion to science by moving away from its primary function as part of a path to relieve suffering. Hyland, however, reflected both positions regarding change from religious origins (2015) and dangers of reinforcing neoliberal ideologies (2017).

Hyland (2017) took Purser and Loy's (2013) 'Mc Mindfulness' criticisms into the educational arena. He saw mindfulness being used to calm students or enhance their attention in order to achieve higher grades. This is a far cry from the pedagogy called for by Ergas (2013) who recognised the contribution of mindfulness to transformative learning principles, such as autonomous critical thinking about knowledge, values and culture. Forbes (2018) also addressed religious and socio-political standpoints, promoting a mindfulness education that revitalizes the wisdom of earlier traditions and challenges neoliberal, market-based structures.

Part of Purser and Loy's (2013) concerns about secular mindfulness was its commercial popularity. They discussed how this movement has turned into a lucrative cottage industry for resolving almost every area of daily concern. For them the danger lies in mindful practice becoming an instrument, re-orientated towards the needs of the market. Hyland (2017) was also critical of a 'mindfulness business' that, he believed, could only disappoint vulnerable consumers searching for a panacea. He identified short term mindfulness strategies as ineffective and promoting false promises, as benefits come through sustained practice over time.

The financial benefits of mindfulness can also be viewed in the number of school programmes emerging. Ball (1995) discussed the role of policy entrepreneurs and this may be seen through the growth of organisations in the UK, such as Mindfulness in Schools, British Mindfulness Institute and Mind Space who offer training and resources to schools. Such groups insist that practitioners receive their training and certification (MiSP, 2015). Although books that offer mindfulness activities within the classroom are available, there is the belief that effective teaching needs training and this comes at a cost. There is also the issue of research being used to promote a particular school programme (Rix and Bernay, 2014). This is something that I was aware of in my evaluation of the Paws b programme. Ironically, in dismissing qualitative research, Weare (2013) may miss opportunities to show positive outcomes for Paws b from alternative paradigms.

## **Mindfulness for Social Change**

I have included these studies as examples of using mindfulness with children to promote and encourage social change. During my evaluation I was hoping to focus on such benefits as there were few investigations that covered such a purpose. Forbes (2019) and Magee (2016) believe that mindfulness can engage directly with the mind to help recognise and react against the socio-cultural norms that reflect prejudice, bias and privilege. At first glance Costello and Lawler (2014) may have addressed this type of research by deliberately choosing children from a lower socio-economic background in Dublin for their study. Claims that mindfulness could help increase resilience for the disadvantaged amid experiences of poverty and crime were made, however this paper failed to discuss inequality within external conditions. The emphasis was still on individuals looking inside themselves to develop inner strength, as opposed to looking outside to contribute to changes in existing social, political and economic contexts. Within the context of Israeli-Palestinian conflict Berger et al. (2018) showed, through a large quantitative study, how mindfulness contributed to reducing prejudice and negative attitudes of Jewish youth towards Palestinians within three elementary schools. This research however took place within a specific culture polarised by religion and politics. When conflict and inequality are more difficult to identify mindfulness may be difficult to target and implement in such a way.

Hyde and LaPrad (2015) gave examples of American schools connecting mindfulness with democratic principles. They viewed mindfulness as supporting and encouraging critical thinking, reflection, individual freedom and social interaction aiming towards equity for all. Eagle Rock is a small school of 72 adolescents in Colorado. School videos on social media demonstrated democratic features such as governance and judicial council. Strong emphasis was placed on physical activity

and ecology, while commitments spoke of developing mind, body and spirit through openly supporting mindfulness in teaching (Justmeans, 2020). This appeared to be an unusual school in relation to American's educational context. The USA was accused by Sahlberg (2012) of being one of the western countries promoting a narrowed educational agenda of teach, learn and test. It must also be recognised that the children were older than primary age.

Another example of a democratic mindfulness school was that of Westminster School in Vermont, which covered a wider age range, including kindergarten. Hyde and LaPrad (2015) stated that being present was at the heart of all learning experiences and the school community practised this in many ways, including mindfulness and yoga. The faculty expressed a belief that, by building focusing skills, students were able to concentrate on academic study, complex social problems and decision making, transferable both within and outside school. Armstrong (2019) gave more description on Westminster school than Hyde and LaPrad, who relied heavily on staff comments alongside paraphrased school mission statements. His focus however was on creative mindfulness activities rather than those promoting democratic principles. Some may say that to truly illustrate mindfulness promoting critical thinking and social action, explicit examples are needed which align themselves to the philosophies of Dewey, as described by Hyde and LaPrad. Dewey (1938) will be examined when social justice is introduced on page 34. Once again, this school did not appear to reflect the current educational focus of the USA, as identified by Sahlberg (2012). I wondered whether our school could also promote these principles, within the mindfulness programme, without a national focus that aligned with such aims.

## **The Mindfulness in Schools Project**

The Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP) created the Paws b programme under evaluation so it is important to locate this organisation within the two main perspectives to identify underlying principles and investigate specific criticisms. According to Simpson (2017) MiSP is keen to disassociate itself from any religious or spiritual concepts. On their recently updated website homepage (MiSP, 2020), it is clearly explained that the form of mindfulness being promoted is to be seen as strictly secular. While there is acknowledgement that silence and contemplation play an important role in the world's great faiths, MiSP clearly state that their framework is based on common sense and practical application, even though there are periods of sitting quietly and reflection on the nature of humanity.

Richard Burnett is a secondary school teacher who co-founded MiSP. His research paper (Burnett, 2011) explored adult mindfulness from both secular and Buddhist perspectives in order to develop an approach for teaching mindfulness in secondary schools. Burnett considered how ethics associated with Buddhism could be transferred to the secular, educational context and concluded that an educational programme could encompass clinical application and spiritual practice. The origins of MiSP tentatively connected both secular and spiritual perspectives, but began to evolve.

The current position gives a predominantly secular view of the project. Weare, their main academic figurehead, acknowledged that 'mindfulness is said to have originated from Buddhist philosophy and meditation' (2013 p. 4), but saw secular mindfulness being developed through clear involvement with scientific departments in universities and other research units. She believed in developing robust evidence through the provision of systematic review and randomised control trials. Weare also highlighted that mindfulness linked well with the direct concerns of governments and other agencies to reduce the burden of health spending on physical and mental illness, ideally through preventive, low-cost interventions. She did briefly refer to the 'softer areas' (p. 19) such as positive emphasis on improving health rather than focusing on illness and problems, and referred to positive psychology along with happiness and wellbeing. Within her summary of research Weare (2013) stated that examples were chosen as most relevant to schools and any studies that were purely qualitative were excluded. Only one paper is signposted on the website that directly relates to the primary school Paws b programme and this uses quantitative data. Vickery and Dorjee (2015) reported the findings of a controlled feasibility pilot which assessed emotional regulation and meta-cognition in children through self-report questionnaires and a mindfulness measure scale. MiSP, however, fail to mention Thomas and Atkinson (2017) qualitative study of the programme, readily available to find within the Educational Psychology and Practice journal.

It is interesting to note that Weare has collaborated with Thich Nhất Hạnh, a Zen monk recognised for pioneering teachings on mindfulness, Buddhism, global ethics and peace (Nhất Hạnh and Weare, 2017). This book is an authoritative manual of the teachings and practices developed by Thich Nah Han written for educators. Both authors emphasised that mindfulness was a path, drawing on both science and spirituality to offer practices that aim to enhance personal and social change. Ergas (2019) may resonate here when he stated that mindfulness becomes a tool through the education system in which it enters, not because of those who seriously study and implement it. Weare does appear to focus heavily on the secular-therapeutic perspective and the gathering of quantitative evidence to meet government led agendas, however during the latest Mindfulness in School

conference I found her presentation illuminating in the following ways. Weare (2020) referred to mindfulness as a 'Trojan mole' movement, appealing to policy makers but also including transformative effects. She discussed the radical capacity to cultivate compassion and moral guidance for a society in crisis. Her previous activities involved work in developing the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme and materials which were seen to help cultivate holistic and empathic approaches in education (Woolf, 2012).

Specific criticisms have been levelled against the Mindfulness in School Project programmes from Buddhist and critical perspectives. Simpson (2017) saw the secular practice of mindfulness as being introduced into schools to boost resilience, grades and mostly to prioritise calm. Without Buddhist teachings on morality or interdependence Simpson warned against a fixation on the self, as he saw the onus lying with individuals and not on changing a prevailing market system of inequality. He emphasised the need to foster compassionate pro-social action, something that would be reinforced by closer association to Buddhist perspectives. Simpson referred to the Mindful Nation UK report (MAPPG, 2015). In regards to education, the report identified a need to improve results, reduce challenges in mental health and develop virtues relating to character building and resilience. My own feelings about these critiques are that, while I recognise their concerns, I am aware of the danger of generalisations.

Simpson (2017) viewed MiSP as supplying the most widely used syllabus in UK but noted that the courses say little about moral and civic virtues. Simpson went on to illustrate aspects of the secondary school programme (Dot b) and how opportunities had been missed to include student reflection and consideration of others as well as themselves, thus reducing moral application. He saw MiSP trained teachers urging pupils to be kind, calm and compassionate yet the main principle taught relied on children focusing on themselves. There was a strong notion that inner peace would somehow fuel communal harmony but processes on how this would happen remained unclear. It seemed that children were being taught self-pacifying skills rather than questioning the sources of stress in society. Simpson exhibited strong protestations as he accused MiSP of training children to be 'functional cogs in a brutal machine, instead of being empowered to change its workings' (p. 3). I understand criticism related to how the course can appear from the published guidance and materials. There does not appear to be any explicit mention of moving beyond individual wellbeing towards more collective and systematic responses to personal, social and ecological challenges faced within current societies. Nevertheless, it cannot be assumed that these issues would not be raised

during mindfulness lessons or addressed effectively by the teacher. I am left wondering whether Simpson had observed this programme in action within a variety of classrooms.

The Paws b programme materials (MiSP, 2015) make constant reference to different parts of the brain and their functions. This is becoming popular in other social and emotional literatures for children, such as the *Silly Limbic* series (Harvey, 2017, 2019) written by a psychotherapist and *My Hidden Chimp* (Peters, 2018) written by a consultant psychiatrist. Forbes (2019) critique of mindfulness education's strong links to neuroscience were specifically related to the Hawn Foundation's Mind Up school programme, which is more prevalent within the USA. The caustic description of a particular lesson, based on amygdala responses, sounded very similar to content covered within Paws b. His criticisms were founded on the opinion that neuro-scientific data should not substitute explicit moral positions that promote optimal human development and interdependence. Forbes saw potential dangers when focusing on the brain and its neuro-plastic ability to change, focusing problems on the individual rather than on social conditions that contribute to personal and social unhappiness. In my opinion the inclusion of neuroscience within the lessons does not substitute the exploration of moral purpose, but this is primarily dependent on choices made by individual teachers.

Another critic of MiSP is Purser, who found notoriety in the widely cited 'McMindfulness' article (Purser and Loy, 2013). His recently published book (Purser 2019) expanded the critical review of secular mindfulness further through illustrating his view of an emerging capitalist spirituality. Some may believe the tone is vitriolic, however the subject matter could be viewed as thought provoking, relevant and resonating loudly with many critical scholars' arguments and protestations. A whole chapter was dedicated to exploring mindfulness in schools. Purser accused these programmes of promoting self-pacifying techniques in authoritarian tones, masked by missionary zeal and humanistic rhetoric. He poured scorn on the idea of likening mindfulness to disciplining pets by illustrating the MiSP metaphor of attention being like a puppy. Purser, within the acknowledgements, gave gratitude to Simpson (2017) who he admitted to sharing many exchanges with regarding their mutual suspicions towards the current mindfulness movement. He also referred to Forbes (2019) as an early 'comrade'. Once again, I am left wondering whether an author has experienced a mindfulness programme operating within a diversity of classrooms. I continue to remain sceptical of these critical generalisations and use of verbose rhetoric. I do, however, acknowledge potential issues with programme content that lacks specific guidance in relation to collective self-care and the promotion of equitable, system change.



## **A New Educational Perspective for Mindfulness**

Both secular-therapeutic and religious-spiritual perspectives on mindfulness display issues when applying themselves to education. Therapeutic perspective popularity is illustrated through its prevalence in mindfulness programmes and overreliance on quantitative research. Use of mindfulness as a tool raises criticisms through the aim to enhance teacher and student resilience to cope within an oppressive system (Reveley, 2015). This secular practice, without a value driven agenda, is in danger of being devoured by neo-liberal agendas (Forbes, 2019), but appears to have moved into education with great success. As Ergas (2019) stated, scientists have crafted a language that appeals to a system that would neither understand nor tolerate Buddhist terms but are fluent in the language of a market economy.

Critics of this perspective see mindfulness as a holistic endeavour that concerns character, virtue, self-knowledge and social engagement (Aloni, 2007), however the danger of emphasising Buddhist roots jeopardises its acceptance in current educational contexts. For this perspective to be applicable to secular schools, Ergas (2019) recognised the need for a narrative that was neither religious nor spiritual but rather educational. Only when mindfulness can be accepted within present contexts can it begin to critically review and change socio-cultural conditions that are inherently unfair and exploitative. The more criticisms mindfulness programmes levy at society and its policy makers, the more resistance they could face from the systems they seek to change. Mindfulness can only make a difference from within, but scholars concerned with the exploitation of secular mindfulness have yet to propose any workable process within education systems at this time.

Social justice as a process for educational research will be discussed within the next chapter, however the following literature has been included to explore social justice principles within education. This is relevant to my evaluation in terms of identifying aspects of the programme that support a secular framework for mindfulness as a force for positive, social change. Definitions for social justice are diverse, as illustrated by Marshall and Oliva's (2010) extensive list of attributes, and can sometimes portray idealised, abstract concepts that do not match the realities of educational provision (Christie, 2010). For me foundational values relate to democracy, equity and respect. Dantley and Tilman (2006) emphasised particular attention often paid to marginalised groups in society, but I would argue that marginalisation can sometimes be difficult to identify and generalise.

The intentions of social justice resonate closely with the traditions of critical theory. I will now identify elements from critical theories that could provide evidence of a moral, mindfulness framework, although my specific focus on social justice will be explored further on in this chapter. Karl Marx, a foundational theorist in critical theory, believed that people needed to understand and reflect upon their ideals then act upon them to create political and social revolution for equality. Marx emphasised that dialogue must serve as an empowering tool for evaluating, refining and producing change (Dell'Angelo et al. 2012). Dialogue is important for understanding and reflecting on personal beliefs, alongside the development of a shared language to improve discourse and understanding. These elements became significant markers within my evaluation for identifying the promotion of social justice principles for personal and communal change.

Kellner (2003) saw previous critical theories as still relevant to the new millennium but also acknowledged the need for a more relevant, adaptive approach. He recognised the neglect of critical theory to address the importance of gender, race, sexuality and the changing social and economic dimensions of human life. While Kellner did not elaborate on these factors, closer analysis of modern identities can expose complicated, fluid boundaries. Relating back to Dantley and Tillman's (2006) emphasis on marginalised groups, Kellner illustrated the challenges of identification and categorisation in an increasingly interwoven and changing world. My evaluation related to a whole class programme, promoting inclusivity for all children without the need to label individuals and groups.

I believe it is important to find versions of critical theories that resonate with existing capitalist societies. Kellner (2003) examined modern societal phenomena such as the growth of technology and social media, cultural conflict and terrorism, alongside neo-liberal business models of testing and competition now common place within education. While he made some important points regarding the need for a radical reconstruction of education, I would comment that this paper had a reductionist view of the changing world. Verhaeghe (2014) added to this commentary on modern day life by stressing excessive consumerism and unaccountable corporate control as major contributions to issues faced by individuals today. He went on to illustrate how current cultural influences, as described above, have a strong power to affect and damage personal identities. The power to control one's own self-identity is an aspiration shared by critical theorists and mindfulness, thus supplying another marker for recognising moral purpose within my programme evaluation.

Kellner (2003) referred to social justice numerous times but did not use this term as a concept in its own right. There have since been significant developments in educational theories relating to social justice (Smith, 2012). Greater emphasis is now being placed on individual agency alongside the importance of fair and just relations between the individual and society. Griffiths (1998), although writing some time ago, provided a clear definition of social justice as a concept and methodology. Her work has been drawn upon strongly during my study. She emphasised that negotiation must take place between the individual and the group to ensure justice for all. The acknowledgement of the individual within the group may make social justice more appealing than critical theory for current societies firmly entrenched in neo-liberal traditions. Vita (2014) proposed how both critical theory and social justice could be merged to improve application. Without getting embroiled in a discussion on similarities and differences here, I have attempted to extract further concepts that help support a social justice perspective on mindfulness in education. This fusion of these two traditions will become more apparent throughout following chapters.

Social justice closely relates to John Rawls and his conception of fairness for all (Vita, 2014). Dewey can also be considered here, especially with social justice emphasis on democracy (Hyde and LaPrad, 2015). Although many of Dewey's writings are from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Hyde and LaPrad recognised his continued relevance in today's world. Dewey (1938) argued for a curriculum that integrated student interest with experiences and to me, as a teacher, this appears educationally fundamental. While some ideas may seem overly idealistic, insights into both the developmental nature of children and the societal benefits of a highly engaging curriculum are revealed. In arguing for a curriculum based on children's interests Dewey saw this as a foundation for their growth and democracy. Schools would plan activities to foster individuals as producers of social enterprises to benefit the communities around them. He also made reference to personal reflection and the power of self-control. These concepts resonated well with mindfulness and social justice as they showed benefits for both the individual and others through empowerment, collaboration and civic purpose. I began to see links between Dewey's progressive education system and the development of eudaimonic wellbeing (Seligman, 2002). A secular, moral purpose for mindfulness was now forming as an investigation of specific social justice principles within the programme evaluation. Social justice education, however, required a deeper definition.

Nieuwenhuis (2011) illustrated certain challenges that need to be addressed before social justice in education can be established. Equality can be portrayed as fundamentally positive, politically correct and achievable but is in itself impossible to promote as no two individuals are the same. The

tension between promoting equality by eradicating injustice, while also developing the unique talents of people, raises the question of how social justice can be achieved in education. As mentioned earlier fairness, or equality of opportunity, is a more reasonable aim than equality itself. There is also the issue of empowerment. In terms of developing feelings of empowerment within individuals and groups, which is my intention within this study, a key role is accorded to positive social experiences and situations which allow for personal growth. In some sense empowerment is viewed as a social phenomenon. This raises the question of how individual or group empowerment can occur without disempowering, or appearing to disempower, others thus initiating a backlash of dissatisfaction and resistance (Collins, 1994). Griffith's (1998) concept of fairness, explored later in this review, offered potential strategies that could be adapted within the teaching of the programme to address this issue.

Much literature on social justice in education relates to secondary education and university contexts. This may highlight issues in addressing social justice principles with younger children, who have yet to develop knowledge of social, economic and political structures or terms such as discrimination, injustice and inequality. As the children in my evaluation were aged seven and eight this was a significant issue to address. Kelly and Brooks (2009) explored commonly expressed concerns such as younger children experiencing difficulties in understanding political issues, becoming engaged and forming nuanced opinions. When children are considered highly impressionable, teachers may also feel compelled to circumvent controversial issues to avoid indoctrinating children with their own opinions (Kelly and Brandes, 2001). This is something that I was keenly aware of in terms of being the mindfulness facilitator and evaluator. The use of ethical guidelines and mindful awareness will be discussed in future chapters to address this issue.

Griffiths (1998) is a prominent contributor for educational research promoting social justice. In a book written 25 years ago she collaborated with a primary school teacher (Griffiths and Davies, 1995) to collate some interesting case studies that illustrated the promotion of social justice principles within primary school settings. The very title of this book *In Fairness to Children* echoed Rawl's main principle of fairness for all (Vita, 2014). The diverse concepts of social justice education (Marshall and Oliva, 2010) can be summarised and explained to children as actions that promote being fair to others. This would allow social justice principles to be recognised and understood by younger children and help navigate the fluctuation of empowerment and feelings of disempowerment between individuals and groups. As such, references to fairness became significant features of importance within my study data.

While being part of The Primary Curriculum Series published to support professional practice, *In Fairness to Children* (Griffiths and Davies, 1995) is little known and I have only accessed one book review written from that time (Roth, 1996). This source, however, was of great interest to my study. It illustrated principles of social justice to inform processes for increasing fairness in school practice such as the combination of individual empowerment and the righting of structural injustices, due to race, class, gender and special needs. Through this the value of each individual is highlighted and recognised as an important part of a community. Griffiths and Davies, recounting stories taken directly from classrooms, clearly demonstrated schools where children were treated with fairness and justice and where they learnt to treat others in the same way. I identify strongly with these concepts as a teacher promoting positive change within education, and a mindfulness facilitator hoping to utilise a secular, moral-based school programme to aid such a purpose. The next section investigates how social justice and mindfulness can be brought together.

I have only found two papers that actively address links between social justice and mindfulness pedagogy. Hyde and LaPrad (2015), in their investigation of mindfulness and democratic education, explored connections between the recognition of organised oppressive external forces with mindfulness that seeks to identify and transform the oppressor within. They believed that the external, social self could direct action once the internal self was strengthened. The development of compassion was also identified as a common aim for social justice and mindfulness. Hyde and LaPrad referred to Dewey (1896) who had highlighted the importance of awareness, reflection and action in everyday life. Dewey's philosophy attempted to balance the inner (personal) with the outer (social) and so could be seen to take mindful pedagogy to an active state in the world, through positive and adaptive social action. These theories become particularly pertinent within my findings and analysis.

Kaufman (2017, p2) made a strong case for what he termed 'critical contemplative pedagogy'. This is a combination of inner-directed practice aiming to find balance and wholeness in student lives with an outer directed force that attempts to foster social change. The dimensions he highlighted included the awareness of interdependence, embracing impermanence and fostering intentionality. While Kaufman's ideas were exploratory and offered as an ongoing dialogue, this paper began to shed light on important, moral applications that could be fostered within a mindfulness framework for schools. Most research studies involving mindfulness and social justice education have been situated within university settings (Magee, 2016; Berila, 2016). Mindfulness has been seen to heighten greater engagement in personal critique, granting students perspectives from which to

explore biases such as racism, gender and identity, possibly viewed as more applicable to undergraduate experiences. If these issues are explored through advocating fairness in situations that primary school children can relate to (Griffiths and Davies, 1995), the integration of mindfulness may develop a deeper, reflective understanding of social justice for children this age. My evaluation involved an established mindfulness programme that had no obvious affiliation to social justice principles. Burnett (2011), co-founder of the Mindfulness in Schools Project, and Weare (2013, 2014, 2020), the main academic advisor for the charity, appeared to advocate a secular-therapeutic approach, however their previous work had included holistic, empathic approaches to education. My evaluation aimed to identify possible features of the programme that could both support individuals and stimulate opportunities for greater equity, through utilising mindfulness.

## **The Nature of Mindfulness**

The words attention and awareness have been referred to many times so far in this chapter. It is now time to draw these terms together to clarify a specific definition of mindfulness for this study. In relation to process, mindfulness involves a particular type of attention to, or awareness of, physical sensations, the environment, the mind and other people (Burdick, 2014). Ergas (2013) was clear to define attention as a personal recognition of an inner and outer world, not the sustained attention given to an educational activity. Bristow (2017) also saw this distinction between focused awareness, which can involve calmness and concentration, and mindful awareness, which includes learning about different aspects of the mind and developing qualities such as openness, curiosity and care. The definition of mindfulness as heightened awareness in conscious thinking was particularly significant for teaching and evaluating the Paws b programme.

Holland (2004) clearly explained distinctions between mindfulness and other types of meditation, a necessity when comparing studies that have investigated various types of contemplative activities. There are different emphasises and each practice calls upon particular skills. Meditation focuses on an object, thought, or sound to the exclusion of all else as a means of attaining calm. The singular focus can be on a chant, prayer, icon, or any other point of attention, such as breath. The other form of contemplative practice, Vipassana, or mindfulness, emphasizes insight through awareness of the present moment. This awareness occurs through a non-judgmental acceptance of all that arises in the mind and body through self-observation. Here the term non-judgement is displayed more clearly in its truest form. Non judgement leads to acceptance of emotions. The practice of mindfulness also involves a point of focus, but this serves as an anchor around which other

experiences, such as thoughts, emotions and sensations, are witnessed and allowed to dissipate. This point of focus, or gentle anchor, in mindfulness meditation is most frequently the breath. There are three facets defined by Ergas (2019) which distinguish mindfulness from other forms of meditation. In terms of attention a beginner may quickly succumb to rumination, mind wandering or deliberate planning. Wandering goes on until the individual recognises this issue and brings attention back to the anchor of choice, often the breath. Lack of sustained attention can yield irritation, frustration and self-criticism for the individual. The second core facet of attitude must then be drawn upon through mentally fostering acceptance of any feelings that arise, including such things as non-judgement, non-striving, compassion and kindness. The third facet of intention undergirds the entire process by encouraging the recurrent re-establishment of attention and attitude. This information was particularly important to my evaluation when distinguishing activities that involve mindfulness practice and identifying the social-emotional learning that occurred outside of mindfulness.

There was also the issue of defining mindfulness practice and a mindful way of being, referred to in some literature as dispositional mindfulness. This concept is sometimes known as trait mindfulness and refers to a type of consciousness that has only recently been given serious research considerations (Tomasulo, 2020; Rau and Williams, 2016). Mindfulness, when viewed in this way, becomes a quality in our life — a trait, not a state entered into during practice. The space between perception and response becomes clearer once the gap is recognised. Dispositional mindfulness within everyday life is an invitation to widen that gap simply by noticing it exists. Stepping back from moment-to-moment situations cultivates mindfulness, which then opens the way to responsiveness and the possibility to shift personal perceptions for the better. This concept was particularly relevant when my experiences as mindfulness facilitator and democratic evaluator were investigated.

## **Whole Programme Evaluation**

Mindfulness has been explored and defined to aid my evaluation. There are now other aspects of the Paws b programme to consider. This involves not just the experience of mindfulness but also the social and emotional learning that gives these newly learnt skills purpose and context. Within the MiSP (2015) practitioner materials it states that an integrated approach is adopted. The website refers to the introduction of key skills to help navigate young people through life's difficulties, however there seems to be greater emphasis placed on the teaching of mindfulness. Thomas and Atkinson (2017) did not note aspects of social and emotional learning as separate to mindfulness

during their investigation of Paws b, however I see this differentiation as an important aspect for my study. There was another programme which was of interest to my school called Jigsaw. This is a comprehensive PSHE scheme underpinned by mindfulness philosophy and practice, available for primary schools to teach PSHE across the whole school (Wolstenholme et al., 2016). The Jigsaw programme will feature within my discussion and conclusion as a possible resource to support the Paws b programme in response to my evaluation findings.

The literature explored below seemed particularly relevant in terms of social and emotional learning principles emphasised by the mindfulness programme. Adelman (2018) painted a disturbing picture of the toxic effects of the modern schooling system when he explored children's eroding self-belief and fear of failure produced within highly competitive, rigid testing systems. There have been developments in personal and social education towards a 'growth mindset' (Dwek, 2017 p. 7), where mistakes are not only accepted but seen as integral in the learning process to promote creativity, risk-taking and resilience. Tugend (2012) recognised the importance of embracing such an ideology through placing emphasis on the process of learning rather than solely on results. According to the MiSP (2015) teaching resources what the child says matters more than what the teacher says, as whatever comes forth within a lesson must be welcomed. This highlights programme potential for developing an environment of experimentation, questioning and inquiry without repression through the fear of failure.

I have chosen papers that relate social and emotional learning directly to mindfulness, relevant to the fusion that could be observed within the Paws b programme. There are, however, differences in opinion to how these areas connect. Feuerborn and Guelder (2019) reviewed mindfulness-based practices in schools next to social-emotional competency areas which included self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. They concluded that results showed a conceptual fit between both frameworks, although I felt that their definition of mindfulness remained vague and unclear throughout the paper. Jones (2011) made a bold statement about educationalists overlooking mindfulness as a powerful and cheap tool for successfully delivering social and emotional learning objectives. He supplied a more detailed explanation of the benefits of mindfulness which included increased sensory awareness, greater cognitive control, enhanced regulation of emotions, acceptance of transient thoughts and feelings, and the capacity to modulate attention. The goals of social and emotional learning include nurturing social skills and empathy, alongside self-awareness and motivation, which appeared to be missing from this list.



In my opinion mindfulness can help develop, but does not automatically address, the areas of social and emotional learning. Lantieri and Zakrzewski (2015) gave a more compelling definitions of social and emotional learning and mindfulness as two distinct areas with the ability to connect. Their explanations resonated strongly with Holland (2004) and Ergas (2019) concepts of mindfulness. For Lantieri and Zakrzewski mindfulness and social and emotional learning can be viewed in tandem. SEL works from the outside in, with a focus on teaching skills, and mindfulness from the inside out, drawing on the premise of individuals having the innate capacity for relationship building qualities such as empathy and kindness. I found this particularly important when my skills as a mindfulness facilitator were evaluated.

There are other papers that address concepts such as empathy and compassion, highlighted as key factors in social justice (Kaufman, 2017). Cotton (2013) supplied a comprehensive review of strategies to enhance empathetic feelings and increase pro-social behaviour within social-emotional learning, without reference to mindfulness. She described empathy as the affective capacity to share in another's feelings and the cognitive ability to understand others. The ability to communicate feelings and understand others through verbal and non-verbal means was highlighted as fundamental. Cotton explained that while some people have natural empathy, skills can be taught within school. This begins with initially exploring and identifying one's own feelings to develop the ability to relate to others. Exercises focus on recognising similarities with others, imagining another's perspective and exposure to emotionally arousing stimulus were all viewed as highly important. This list of tasks was particularly useful when evaluating how far the Paws b programme encouraged empathy and compassion, the part mindfulness had to play and the impact these traits had on developing social justice principles.

Cotton (2013) advocated conscious teacher behaviour, such as modelling empathic responses, use of positive trait attribution and verbalising alternative perspectives with potential consequences, to reinforce children's prosocial self-identities. This was similar to Dix's (2017) emphasis on teachers outwardly displaying positive attitudes. Rather than specifically focusing on actions within social and emotional lessons, Dix encouraged teachers to maintain a calm demeanour while practising active listening, restorative conversations and problem-solving narratives throughout the school day. A programme that could be seen to encourage teachers to foster a positive classroom climate through their own actions would be a noteworthy feature for my evaluation. Data relating to teacher attitudes and behaviours would become an important theme that arose from this study.

The Paws b lessons are specifically aimed at Key Stage 2 children. MiSP resources have not yet catered for younger children or offered guidance on approaches that support specific learning or emotional needs. Other programmes, such as MindBe (2020), Smiling Mind (Bailey et al.,2018), SoBe mindfulness (Rogers, 2017) and the Kindness Curriculum (Flook and Pinger, 2017) introduce mindfulness to children much earlier. Children as young as pre-school age have been shown to benefit from mindfulness and incorporated social and emotional learning (Flook et al.,2015) through a wide range of practical activities including stories, crafts, songs and movement (Flook and Pinger, 2017; Piotrowski et al.,2017). This raised the question of whether Paws b introduces mindfulness at the optimum age for children.

The programme's six-hour allocation can appear to discourage additional activities such as craft, stories, songs or movement. Coholic (2011) evaluated an art-based mindfulness programme, involving clay, paint and stories. Conclusions showed promotion of emotional understanding, self-esteem, social skills and resilience through activities perceived by the children as stimulating and enjoyable. Benefits have also been seen when combining yoga and mindfulness to teach children awareness of their bodies, emotions and surroundings (Cruchon, 2009). Nhất Hanh and Vriezen (2008) offered a set of mindful movements that aimed to effectively connect mind, body and awareness of breath. Willard (2010) saw mindfulness as an empowering activity that children could improvise and do for themselves. He devised games and art projects, designed for diverse attention spans and sensory learning styles, to encourage children to get creative and stay open-minded. This literature would become relevant when participants were formulating ideas for improving and extending the content of the Paws b programme to meet a variety of learning styles.

Pedagogical theories can explore how and why learning has been effective in new initiatives. This was supported by Blake and Pope (2008) through their strong argument that teachers must develop a better understanding of their student's cognitive development to help satisfy the needs of the whole child and enhance learning experiences. Viewing the Paws b programme as containing two specific positions of mindfulness and social-emotional learning is important when considering differences in teaching styles. This will be explored in greater detail through findings that illuminate my personal mindful facilitator experiences.

Other theories to be considered when evaluating a programme include the importance of beginning from the children's prior understanding and perceptions. CURRE's (2009) review of research emphasised the importance of real-world contexts while James and Pollard (2011) made a strong

point about the significance of informal learning, arising from everyday situations, being at least as significant as formal learning within the classroom. This appears to attune with Dewey's (1938) philosophy and my preferred approach as an educator. Pearce (2016) discussed the power of learning designed to connect what students are taught in school to real-world issues, problems, and applications. She termed this 'authentic learning', with all its effective strategies in developing problem solving and memorable learning experiences, but failed to truly capture the excitement of a child finding familiarity, purpose and relevance in a lesson. Pearce did however mention how authentic learning experiences generate engagement with students. Relevance encourages engagement and enthusiasm, which should bring about meaningful learning. How far children could recognise and relate to the programme materials was an important factor within my investigation, although I was curious as to how particular mindfulness activities involving inner exploration and quiet reflection would be perceived.

My study also planned to explore the importance of dialogue. Effective pedagogies give serious consideration to pupil voice (Niemi et al., 2010). An interesting study by Puntambekar and Kolodner (2005), related to successful 'scaffolding' (Wood et al, 1976) of learning, highlight five central features which include common goal, ongoing diagnosis, adaptive support, dialogue and interactions. While Puntambekar and Kolodner directly related this paper to the subject of science, common factors can be identified within other subject lessons. These features were useful points of reference during my evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching materials and content of the programme.

## Summary

This selected literature portrays the current secular perspective of mindfulness incorporating a strong therapeutic position. Modern programmes have moved away from Buddhist origins to allow for recognition, legitimacy and wide spread acceptance within Western cultures. Mindfulness is becoming an increasingly popular antidote for the stresses that can arise from modern day life, but it appears to have shed its moral and social values to meet demands defined by political agendas. This has led to Buddhist and critical scholars' protests at the way mindfulness can now be used as a tool to uphold and even promote individualism and neo-liberal inequalities.

Evaluation of mindfulness in schools predominantly takes place through quantitative studies attempting to offer empirical evidence of rising educational standards through increased attention and reduced disruptive behaviour. The small number of spiritual-based mindfulness initiatives,

aimed to promote positive social change, illustrate that there is no widely available perspective that meets the current needs of a society displaying significant inequalities whilst being gripped by a growing mental health crisis. An educational programme reflecting Buddhist perspectives could be difficult to establish in a modern, secular culture, while spiritual aims could be perceived as nebulous and difficult to define within a school curriculum. In my study I offer a new social justice framework for mindfulness in schools, that not only focuses on the individual but also on the needs of others to promote connection and compassion. This incorporates moral principles and empowerment, and resonated with psychological studies that highlight the individual's need for social cohesion, community and eudaimonic wellbeing. Such alignment may make this perspective more easily accepted by current educational contexts and policies.

The MiSP school programme could be seen to display secular-therapeutic elements and, as such, has been open to criticism. This review has explored and defined the nature of mindfulness, while literature on social-emotional learning and effective pedagogies has been included to support a more holistic evaluation of effectiveness. My investigation offered children and adults opportunities to share their experiences and views of the lessons. My own insider status provided the perspective of a practising teacher assuming the roles of facilitator and evaluator, addressing a gap in qualitative mindfulness studies in education.

While most of the literature informing and positioning my study has been included within this chapter, my experiences as facilitator illuminated differences in teaching styles, heightened classroom awareness along with the importance of authenticity and personal beliefs, which were investigated after being highlighted by the data. Features illustrated by observing adult and child evaluations included dealing with mistakes, the inclusion of movement and creative activities and boredom, a topic that has yet to be introduced. This additional literature will be linked to the data that inspired its inclusion during my analysis and discussion.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

### **Introduction**

As a focus for this study involved identifying possible social justice themes within the mindfulness programme, I felt that methodology needed to uphold social justice principles. Atkins and Duckworth (2019 p. 1) used the term 'socially just research' for investigations that claim social justice in the way they are conducted as well as their aims. I wished to explore a social justice approach to mindfulness through methods that included and empowered participants. Aspects of researcher mindfulness (Albrecht, 2016) could be applied to evaluation, alongside key markers for quality in qualitative methods (Tracy, 2010). A democratic evaluation model (Kushner, 2017, Hanberger, 2006, MacDonald, 1976) gave practical, conceptual and theoretical purpose for this study. Fetterman (2017) also illustrated a useful evaluative framework which linked clearly with empowerment and social justice. These areas are applicable for both the investigation's means (methods and practices) and its ends.

My ontological and epistemological position reflect critical research principles that underpin social justice and are supported by a mindful evaluator perspective. Qualitative research will also be explored through the need to investigate mindfulness as a path (Ergas, 2019) within the educational tool of the Paws b programme. Emphasis rests on how the process of the programme is illuminated through participant views and how both adult and children make sense of their experiences, including final reflections and lasting impressions of the lessons. Aspects of transference of power (Foucault, 1980) and the importance of discourse (Habermas, 1987) are discussed along with issues relating to children's voices being heard. A democratic evaluative design is illustrated to encompass all theories considered along with a discussion of chosen methods for analysis.

### **Social Justice Methodology**

Critical theory was the initial paradigm that I felt most strongly resonated with this study, alongside the empowering benefits of mindfulness illustrated within the previous chapter. The purpose behind my evaluation was to enrich the school's curriculum, empower children to make positive changes in their lives and help transform future societies that uphold equality and compassion. Critical theory explicitly addressed issues of power and justice through its main aim of critique and change (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994). With further reading and careful reflection, I moved towards a social justice model. Social justice research has many similarities to a critical approach,

but emphasises particular fundamentals. The transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2014) is an umbrella term for research which is focused on change, to include both critical theory and social justice. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) also referred to the transformative paradigm but only as an aim rather than a framework. While transformative methodology can utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods (Mertens, 2014), its essence lies in the exploration of people's thoughts and actions, and the influence social circumstances have on these (Miller and Brewer, 2003).

The ontology identified here is historical realism (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). This accepts the existence of reality independent of personal beliefs, and also acknowledges the subjectivity inherent in humans. There are social forces beyond the control of individuals that affect their perspectives and subsequent behaviours (Saunders et al. 2012). These forces operate on a macro level. At the micro-level subjective, individual perceptions of reality are important for a full understanding of the situation. These interpretations can be shared by groups of individuals, partly because of the influence of external factors. Critical research thus requires the identification of external factors as well as individual interpretations of events.

My evaluation questions required my own perspectives to be investigated alongside additional participant views and experiences. This linked with historical realist ontology through identifying individual interpretations of reality, while acknowledging shared contexts (Saunders et al., 2012). Participants were members of the same school and discussion was encouraged, through a variety of methods, to identify and explore individual interpretations within this shared environment. A multitude of external factors can reflect school culture such as government priorities, curriculum demands, attitudes and opinions of others, along with wider cultural and societal factors. These elements, in unique combination, have an effect on adult and child interpretations of their experiences. There is a need to identify similarities created by these external factors while acknowledging and respecting differences for individuals.

In terms of epistemology, learning is transactional and subjectivist (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Researcher and participants are interactively linked and their values inevitably influence the inquiry. Reality is interactively constructed through language. Approaches often rely on dialogic methods, combined with observation and interviewing, to foster conversation and reflection. Findings are therefore value mediated through discussion, allowing the researcher and participants to question, challenge the natural state and reclaim conflict and tension. The researcher tries to challenge guiding assumptions by raising a critical consciousness to construct a moral vision of a better society

(Brookfield, 2000). This can be done individually or, better still, in collaboration with 'less empowered' others (Taylor and Medina, 2013 p. 6). This is particularly relevant to my ongoing, evaluator discussions with the adult participants and pupil focus group conversations. The term 'less empowered' will be explored and questioned within subsequent sections of this chapter.

Hunter (1994) may be viewed in opposition to critical theory. Education, for him, represented a group of relatively privileged individuals who are, in themselves, a product of the governance of society and an outcome of structural determinants. Critical theory could also be accused of elitism, through its use of dense language (Mack, 2010). Critical theorists may assume they are emancipated and therefore better equipped to analyse and transform society for the emancipation of others, even when working as practitioner researchers. I needed to remain conscious of the potential impact of my own influence when conducting and analysing discussions with participants. I had to be open about my own beliefs while recognising and valuing other views.

Habermas (1987) addressed such criticisms through his theory of communicative action. If society was founded on a commitment to open and frank communication such social determinacy could be overcome. He saw communication being the primary vehicle by which personal and social identity is formed and mutual understanding is constructed (Ingram and Simon-Ingram, 1991). Habermas identified descriptive, prescriptive and expressive uses in dialogue, accompanied by validity claims. The validity of any claim is tested through argumentation and, under suitable conditions without coercion, provides agreement in expressions. Communication, without coercion, was something I hoped to encourage through carefully chosen methods. Foucault's (1980) concept of knowledge as power and my position as an established teacher, trained mindfulness facilitator and evaluator initially posed potential issues, which will be explored in subsequent chapters.

Other criticisms of critical theory included anti-individualism, with narrow, oppressive, abstract principles leading to dominance rather than liberation (Nichols and Allen-Brown, 1996). Conclusions may neglect the practical constraints under which people operate while reducing all differences to inequality. A social justice framework would go some way to address such concerns, through negotiation between individual and group, encouraging agreed concession and compromise in both lessons and evaluation discussions. Examples of such instances will be explored within my findings.

Mertens (2007) saw the transformative paradigm providing a framework for addressing issues of social justice and consequent methodological decisions but only appeared to advocate a mixed

methods approach, with quantitative data providing credibility to outcomes. Charmaz (2005) explored grounded theory as a way of advancing social justice research, but did offer a useful exploration of social justice foci, especially in terms of participant language and Dewey's (1922) central idea of habitual actions lacking conscious reflection. For research to promote change, language and habits need personal and collaborative investigation with potential challenge. This opens up debate between the importance of agency versus structure (Tan, 2013), which will be investigated during the data analysis, when participants' developing understanding of personal choice is explored.

Griffiths (1998) offered a detailed and compelling examination of social justice methodology in relation to qualitative research and theoretical underpinnings for design choice. The terms agency, power and ethics were highlighted as particularly significant, with their own methodological implications. Agency, the capacity for individuals to act independently and make free choices (Downey, 1991), has already been explored as a central aim for a mindfulness moral based framework. Griffiths' definition related specifically to research and illustrated agency as the recognition that people construct their own meanings for events they participate in. This may open up the debate regarding realism versus relativism, depending on how far individuals are seen as autonomous agents in the construction of their own realities. According to historical realism (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), there is an existence of reality independent of personal beliefs. It is therefore important to consider the context and experiences of individuals, exploring how they construct their own realities, to challenge how this may promote or hinder social justice. The only way the context and experiences of individuals can be sought is through establishing trust between researcher and participants for open and honest discussion. I recognised that the establishment of trusting relationships was of paramount importance for all participants within my study if democratic evaluation was to be successful.

Atkins and Duckworth (2019) saw social justice research as making a difference to marginalized and disadvantaged learners. This did not directly resonate with my study as I was not solely focused on identified groups of children. As previously discussed in my introduction, it would also be challenging to recognise learners who felt disadvantaged and identify reasons why. These authors however examined how researchers can implement socially just research methods from a position of power, recognising that participants may view researchers as more knowledgeable. As previously mentioned, in working with teaching assistants and children, my position as teacher, trained mindfulness facilitator and evaluator was a potential issue. Griffiths (1998) had also identified



dangers when the power of the researcher results in participant compliance. She referred to progress towards justice as either empowerment of people or reduction in oppression, but for Foucault (1980) power was more fluid and ever changing. Power is observed everywhere and this cannot be changed, but there are deliberate actions of domination. For Foucault, these actions were the things that needed to be exposed and transformed. Jackson (2013) used a Foucauldian methodology to illustrate how people's perceptions of their self-identity redefined power relations. In creating open conditions people could transform themselves. The aim of the mindfulness programme may have resonated with this principle through encouraging the children to develop skills for empowerment, without disempowering others, and recognize opportunities for personal choice based on moral considerations. The mindfulness programme, if seen as successful in this aim, could enhance this study's methodology by empowering participants to give honest, open responses.

Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford (1997) raised an interesting point regarding participants. Traditionally researchers wishing to implement change in the pursuit of social justice have focused on what have been considered oppressed groups, but they also saw the interests of dominant groups needing to be invoked to support change. If adults are viewed as holding positions of power within school, this study aimed to include such a group, with myself included. An inclusive, democratic process would not exclude any group, whether viewed as dominant or oppressed. This was particularly relevant when the head teacher expressed a wish to contribute her own views to the evaluations.

## **Mindful Evaluation Methodology**

Dispositional mindfulness shows potential benefits for teaching. Mindfulness can also be utilized by a researcher/evaluator through heightened awareness of observations, preconceived opinions and greater reflexivity. Albrecht (2016) synthesised and adapted a number of interpretations to succinctly describe behaviours, qualities and thought processes commonly recognised as mindfulness. Her list included such things as acceptance, authenticity, awareness, curiosity, discernment, compassion, equanimity, impartial witnessing, openness, patience and trust in oneself. These characteristics could be a wish list for any conscientious, qualitative researcher or democratic evaluator. Albrecht related the above-mentioned qualities to a holistic researcher approach within her epistemological approach.

Reference to Systems Thinking (Meadows, 2008) may reflect critical historical realism in considering interacting variables that affect the implementation and efficacy of a programme. Systems thinking allows the researcher to gain a holistic viewpoint of a problem through the careful consideration of many factors, both individual and within the wider context. Albrecht (2016) illustrated examples for the many interconnecting aspects of an individual including physical, behavioural, emotional, social, intellect, moral, spiritual and cultural factors. I have not totally embraced this theory due to its emphasis on outcome-based study designs. While my design has included final interviews and analysis of adults lasting impressions, the emphasis lay on evaluations throughout the programme. It was not focused on assessing end results or measures for displaying improvements in any specific area. I was looking for elements of success through examination of an ongoing process.

Albrecht (2016) also explored holistic relational enquiry (Burrows, 2011); an approach centred on the premise of researching with people rather than for people. This concept acknowledged that the researcher acts as a catalyst to participants' meaning making and data reflects the relational flow that occurs. The cultivation of mindful qualities, as described above, encourages a deeper, dynamic connection between researcher and participants. Opinions are respected and each person feels the freedom to voice their experiences openly and honestly. The researcher is required to adjust methods to suit participant group's needs, values the strength of subjectivity and is open to sharing results with participants. These themes will be explored further, in relation to a democratic evaluator role, when my study design is introduced.

Lemon (2017) showed how applying a mindful practice to qualitative data collection could attune researchers to the present moment, deepen self-reflexivity and enhance trustworthiness, while Warin (2011) investigated how reflexivity is interwoven with the concept of value-based mindfulness. His longitudinal study related to the ongoing creation of personal self throughout the school years, but also highlighted the connection between reflexivity, morality and a mindful approach to research. These sources offered some useful principles based on personal experiences alongside a selection of philosophical, spiritual and psychological sources, but there may be issues as to whether such idealistic expectations can be met within a relatively short research timeline. My role as programme facilitator and evaluator only covered a period of 12 weeks but it would be difficult to identify a timeline to this study due to my insider status. I have working relationships with adult participants, continuous weekly lessons with the children and ongoing conversations with staff regarding mindfulness practice and development.

## Qualitative Evaluation

My evaluation gathered qualitative data because I was interested in participant attitudes, feelings and behaviours, to illustrate knowledge identified as hermeneutic and critical (Habermas, 1970). Through discussion participants could explore personal viewpoints to develop understanding of how and why their opinions had been shaped. This created openness, encouraging people to expand their responses and illuminate new topics not initially considered. There were also opportunities to question and challenge beliefs based on social, political, cultural and personal experiences thus encouraging empowerment and change. Raising critical consciousness is a fundamental aim of a critical researcher in the movement towards social justice (Freire, 1974). This guided my methodology and was relevant for reflecting on the conduct of my evaluation.

Some researchers have attempted to quantify mindfulness through outcome-based measures and Hyland (2016) has criticized this strongly. There has been an inability to investigate the mechanisms of mindfulness itself through such data (Thomas and Atkinson, 2017), but I am also aware that qualitative research has limitations. One issue related to the smaller number of participants involved alongside time needed for collection and analysis (O'Neil, 2006). Results were unable to be generalised, however my evaluation questions did not seek to make wider generalisations from findings. Ercikan and Roth (2005) discussed how detailed explanations of context and process could resonate with the reader's own situation and experiences. Applicability may thus be constructed on an individual basis through closer analysis of less data. I used detailed notes for each lesson recording children, adult and my own reactions. This source aided reference to context and process during analysis.

Qualitative research has sometimes been criticised in relation to its subjectivity however no research can escape subjectivity (Ercikan and Roth, 2005). Awareness of my own subjectivity, within adult and pupil discussions and during data analysis, has become part of the evaluation. A critical researcher must admit to bias being present in every action for all involved and expects findings to reflect such bias (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994) and the same could be applied to a democratic evaluator role. Glicken (2003), in contrast, believed that the researcher, while being part of a study, must attempt to be as objective as possible to minimise bias in any findings. Hellawell (2006) may have offered a solution to this dilemma in describing the insider-outsider sliding continuum which showed how researchers can shift perspectives to achieve more reflexivity. As a mindfulness facilitator, teacher and evaluator I was careful to explore the impact these perspectives had on my evaluative design.

Mertens (2014) supplied standards for judging quality in qualitative data. This included dependability, credibility, confirmability and were all considered during the construction of my evaluation design. Diary entries and pupil discussion after each lesson allowed change to be tracked. I know the class involved and have taught them in other lessons. This allowed me to investigate differences when teaching mindfulness. Triangulation of views was established through my participation as facilitator, observing adults and children. Triangulation within adult views was established through including diary entries, interviews and concept maps. Pupil voices during lessons, outside of lessons and from focus group discussion also created another method of triangulation. The wealth of detailed data collected throughout the programme allowed for increased credibility and confirmability.

More specific criteria for judging qualitative data, presented by Tracy (2010), included an eight-point conceptualization which resonated with aspects of social justice research. Key markers including worthy topic, researcher self-reflexivity, member reflections, showing rather than telling and transparency were all significant within this framework. Other criteria such as evocative representation, naturalistic generalizations and transferable findings would be more difficult to meet. Griffiths (1998), however, clearly stated that perfection in research cannot exist. I was keen to follow her advice about being honest and transparent about what did and did not work. Practical issues such as time constraints and the need to compromise with participants (Griffiths, 1998) resonated strongly with my own experiences. My methods required reflexivity to readily adapt to both adult and child responses and needs. Acknowledging participants' personal contexts was important to understand certain attitudes during the investigation. Hammersley (2012) highlighted that evidence which does not fit with prior assumptions of critical theory could be in danger of being overlooked. Illustrating parts of an investigation that do not necessarily support researchers own socio-political position, interests and values are, however, important social justice research principles that Griffiths examined, and they became strong considerations during my own study.

Case study methods maintain deep connections to core values, and intentions, while being particularly descriptive and heuristic (Merriam, 2009). The diversity of case studies, on-going debates about credibility and the use of case study in qualitative research, have suggested that differences in perspectives on case study methodology may prevent researchers from developing a mutual understanding of its practice and rigour. In addition, there is much discussion of case study limitations (Hyett et al., 2014). Smith (1991) suggested that case study research is logically the weakest method of knowing. While this could reflect prejudice rather than critique, it may also

illustrate significant issues of legitimacy and respectability amongst certain academics. Like other qualitative research, case studies have to demonstrate validity. Cohen et al. (2011) saw this as difficult due to the uniqueness of situations, but did offer some important guidelines. For them frequency is not a central issue; it is the importance of the situation that can be explained through description and insight. A single event may occur which is hugely important to a person or situation. Case studies catch the unfolding dynamics of particular situations (Nisbet and Watt, 1984). Kushner (2014a) made a strong case for case study evaluation in that it can be grounded in the experiences, issues and dilemmas of practitioners. He saw the importance of understanding how programmes impact on people's lives through the details of a case study setting, without losing the ability to make broader generalisations.

## **Children's Voices**

I have already identified the importance of pupil voice for learning (Niemi et al., 2010). Pupil voice within research offers unique perspectives on learning, teaching, and schooling. Children's insights warrant both attention and responses from adults, to be given opportunities to actively shape their education (Cook-Sather, 2006). Smyth (2012), who has written extensively on social justice, argued for policy approaches that are informed by and celebrate 'student voice'. His position exemplified how these concepts intrinsically link and support one another. Democratic evaluation, as discussed below, seeks to represent a range of interests (Kushner, 2017). In collaborating to make judgements, children's perspectives and personal evaluations are central and must take precedence. The topic itself needs children to be heard. Mindfulness has already been identified as an inner experience that requires personal perspectives to be fully understood (McCabe et al., 2017).

It must be noted that while children's perspectives were sought during this study, they did not take part in constructing the evaluation focus or design. Fielding (2004) had referred to children, aged as young as five years old, as co-researchers jointly developing observation schedules and videoing lessons with their teacher, although there is a possibility that the teacher may have guided this investigation more than was inferred. During my investigation it was important to consider the short time frame, while acknowledging the age, research experience and confidence of the children. Additional time would have been required for learning, discussing and trialling methods. We spoke about reasons for evaluation and the children enjoyed sharing their views, but they did not plan activities, offer alternative methods or take part in data analysis.

There are a number of papers that address benefits and potential limitations when using children's voices. Tangen (2008) supplied useful distinctions when describing the metaphorical term 'listening to children'. He referred to active listening as offering interpretations, giving meaning to messages and value to those being listened to. Issues were raised relating to working with young children, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language due to potential problems in verbally expressing opinions and feelings. Tangen discussed alternative methods of obtaining views such as play and creative activities. My alternative method was observation of the children within lessons. Tangen also questioned whether adults could still understand what it is like to be a child and truly view the child's perspective. He offered benefits from both insider and outsider epistemologies. As discussed before, the short time frame of the study meant that children did not take part in planning the evaluation, however the focus group had an active role in contributing to the data. Children, as insiders, and adults, as outsiders, worked together to produce new knowledge. When looking at outsider epistemology Tangen suggested that additional adults could be involved as outsiders, to view situations at a distance and be in a better position to understand certain experiences. As an evaluator I could be seen to position myself outside of the programme. As the mindfulness facilitator I assumed the position inside the programme with observing adults as outsiders. The extent to which my dual perspective was possible will be reflected upon within the conclusion.

Of course, there are strong justifications for including children when considering democracy and social justice principles. Pascal and Bertram (2009) saw the importance of participation in empowering children as learners, enabling them to make choices, express ideas and develop a positive sense of self. However, the authors expressed caution, highlighting the danger of children being viewed and treated like adults. My findings will show the developing understanding of children's social-emotional skills which needed careful consideration when analysing evaluations. They may have said things that I disagreed with. Listening to children did not always mean agreeing with them. For me the discussion that followed was important for encouraging children to negotiate their own meanings and values, with alternative viewpoints explored and explained.

Miles and Huberman (1994) raised the important point that reliability and validity depend largely on the skills of the researcher. During this study I have attempted to draw on both teacher and evaluator skills. Jones and Tannock (2002) explored relationships with teacher-researchers and pupils. They noted issues with established adult-child relationships inviting possible accusations of bias in constructing and interpreting data. Bias could be from the child towards a recognised

teacher or from the teacher's pre-formed perception of the child. While Jones and Tannock suggested involving another adult in the data collection they still considered the issue of the child seeing the additional adult as another authority figure, a 'teacher in disguise' (p. 92). Within my investigation the children knew the additional adults well and knew they were not teachers. I am a teacher but was not the class teacher. Our unique blend of relationships may have helped reduce this issue, while the application of mindfulness, both as a concept and as pedagogy, would have also supported honest, open dialogue from the children. There is a great deal of information on the importance of researching children's perspectives; however current top-down management methods, previously referred to (Ball, 1995) and still very relevant within my own school context, have led to both teachers and children being silenced in decision making. This was a new approach for the school. Implications for raising pupil voice will be explored further on.

## **Evaluation Design**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a curriculum initiative which has potential to support significant change within the school. Democratic evaluation is an intimate form of enquiry which is confined to a context and thus links with case studies (Kushner, 2014a). Description and persuasion allow readers to recognise and associate with the situations under review, to encourage them to construct their own generalisations (Kushner, 2017).

Fullan (2015) emphasised how innovators need to be open to the realities of others, share problems regarding implementation and be prepared to make changes to an initiative to improve chances of success. School staff perspectives are thus fundamental to the introduction, continuation or conclusion of a new initiative. He believed that people fail to understand the nature of most educational change through a disregard of its multidimensional elements. Fullan set out three main components in implementing a new programme consisting of new curriculum materials, new teaching strategies and the possible alteration of beliefs. I was able to evaluate the Paws b materials and teaching strategies needed to deliver these lessons from a personal viewpoint, which I acknowledge may not be shared by others. Observer perspectives allowed me to reflect on my own assumptions and understanding of the impact of these lessons.

Change in beliefs is potentially the most difficult area to understand and evaluate, challenging the unstated core values held by individuals regarding the purpose of education. Bristow (2017) emphasised that if schools were compelled to teach mindfulness, without staff knowledge and interest, the outcomes would likely be resistance and misunderstanding. My evaluative design

needed to provide opportunities to investigate my own and observing adult core values and changing beliefs regarding the purpose and implementation of mindfulness in primary school. As has been explored previously, I also needed to remain vigilant of potential issues when encouraging 'communicative action' (Habermas 1987 p. 140) in the commitment to open discussion and argumentation, without coercion.

Kushner (2017) viewed evaluative research as a form of enquiry focused on judgement illustrating a particular methodological approach called 'democratic evaluation', originally devised by MacDonald (1976). Democratic evaluation is an approach which aims to serve the whole community. This allows people to be informed of what others are doing and sees the evaluator as someone who 'brokers' the process. It generally focuses on inclusive practices fostering participation and collaboration, but the evaluator aims to make no judgement or recommendations. I was however one of the participants which gave evaluation a number of levels which I will now explore.

Kushner (2014b) supplied theories which allowed me to consider my two roles and the impact these had on the purpose of the evaluation. I was not an impartial evaluator at every stage of this study. Definitions of democratic evaluation, deliberative democratic evaluation and equity focused evaluation illustrate the complexity of this investigation. As the mindfulness facilitator I was viewing the evaluation as an intervention advancing social equity and could thus be seen as an equity-orientated evaluator. As with systems thinking (Albrecht, 2016), there are issues with focusing on outcomes as the evaluation was assessing processes within the programme. There was also the issue of advancing knowledge claims from the vulnerable and excluded. In terms of social justice (Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford, 1997) all views, regardless of perceived status, are to be respected. Deliberate democratic evaluation did not resonate with social justice in its aim to positively discriminate against unfairness as this, once again, seemed to favour those who were perceived as disadvantaged. My position taking account of the evaluations of others seemed to reside within democratic evaluation. I considered everyone who wished to take part in the study, regardless of status. As such I hoped to remain aware of my dual role as facilitator-evaluator and the tension that this may promote. My question asked whether social justice principles are evident. While my facilitator status aimed to include social justice, my evaluator role reviewed whether this did or did not happen.

To investigate the process of democratic evaluation I have drawn on Hanberger's (2006) three democratic evaluation orientations. I viewed discursive, deliberate democracy orientation, which



Hanberger linked to Habermas, as having strongest links to social justice, however could not discount the other orientations. The elitist democracy-orientated model presenting evaluation for the people related to accountability and goal achievement, to include policy and programme makers while situating the evaluator as expert. I believed that this model did not resonate with my aims. I did, however, need to consider that the school could see this type of evaluation as a requirement for continuation of the initiative. I found the other two models, which related to learning, more relevant but recognised how my role changed from mindfulness facilitator to evaluator. The participatory democracy-orientated model represented evaluation by the people. Within this I was the implementer and advocate. Intended use covered empowerment and learning through the focus of goal development, process learning and progress. This type of evaluation involved my own observations, diary comments and was open to adult participant contributions if they felt confident to share their knowledge.

The 'discursive democracy-orientated evaluation' (Hanberger p. 28) represented evaluation with the people, where the evaluator becomes the mediator. The idea of evaluation 'with' the people also reflected Albrecht's (2016) holistic relational enquiry paradigm part of her whole system mindful enquiry methodology. Intended use covered practical knowledge, learning, accountability and public debate with the focus on dialogue and deliberation discourse. My phrasing of questions was particularly important here. As a mediator I could draw on curiosity and non-judgement so that participants would feel able to share their opinions freely without feeling that they were subordinate in terms of knowledge. As I was promoting empowerment within the lessons, the children may have been more comfortable with this principle than the adults. Changes in participant knowledge and confidence over time would need consideration.

Power, as seen by Foucault (1980) is fluid and evaluative processes can fluctuate and change during discourse between groups and individuals. Practical empowerment evaluation (Fetterman, 2017) could be seen to feature strongly with adult participants. Points addressed related more to practical problem solving along with programmatic improvements and outcomes. This may display what adults expected from assuming an evaluative role and links with Griffiths (1998) concept of agency. Transformative empowerment evaluation (Fetterman, 2015) occurs when people learn to take greater control of their own lives. The children were invited to assume this role both within the lessons and through developing self-reflection during group discussion. Power could then move from my position as the perceived expert to the children when they began to explore personal ideas and concepts that I had not previously considered.

Through my evaluator role I needed to make judgements after participants had offered their evaluations. Personalisation in evaluation (Kushner, 2014a) seeks to understand how programmes fit into people's lives as opposed to people fitting into the programme. I was a participant and have illustrated my context within the introduction. The other participants were colleagues and pupils that I worked with on a weekly basis and knew very well. I was aware of some personal circumstances and, with permission, have been able to share certain details within this investigation. I have come to know Anne, Brooklyn and Blue so much better, as they have me. The implications for reflexive methods and interpretation of findings using this knowledge will be explored further on. This evaluation has also illuminated potential changes in adult participant beliefs and values. Kushner resonated with critical researcher ontology in identifying individuals and their wider social influences. He also discussed power as dynamic, shaped by social interactions. While this is in relation to institutional power and the employee, it also echoed Foucault's (1980) concept of power fluidity. Space was needed to enter into debate, however to create space in a very busy school day remained an ongoing challenge.

The only point with democratic evaluation I have found difficult to distinguish was the concept of the evaluator making no judgements or recommendations (Kushner, 2017), another tension when considering the requirements of a doctorate. I feel this may have come from my own participatory role. Without silencing my own voice, I hoped to show how participant evaluations aided my own analysis and deeper understanding of the programme while drawing on theories related to mindfulness, pedagogy and social justice. Critical qualitative research uses language as a main mode to examine the ways different versions of reality are created (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An exploration of participant judgements and beliefs, including with my own, has been a distinct focus. This will be made explicitly clear within findings, analysis and discussion. As such democratic evaluation is part of this study but did not dominate the process or purpose. I could best be seen as an evaluator who drew upon selected democratic evaluation methods.

## **Approaches to Data Analysis**

It is vital to follow a systematic analysis process with a structured and transparent report (Mertens, 2014) but Shapiro and Carlson (2009) warned against the predilection for order encouraging a researcher to interpret results to fit within a pre-existing categorization system. Their model of mindfulness encouraged noticing all the ways of interpreting experience, while attending to experience itself. Shapiro and Carlson noted that if a researcher focuses mindfully, the essential features of an experience rise above their initial appearance, potentially illuminating the events

essential qualities for others to relate to and learn from. Normal habits of mind, as with my inner voice, may close down new information. As a participant I needed to acknowledge my views, as an evaluator I needed to examine experience from 'a beginner's mind' (Kabat Zinn, 2005 p. 34) to map, explore and share moments of change with honesty and integrity.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis linked in with a critical research ontological position (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) relating to experience and language. Themes are identified on a semantic level as data is planned to reflect, rather than unravel, the reality observed by others. Braun and Clarke's phases of thematic analysis begin with familiarisation of the data and a search for patterns. Descriptive codes identify interesting features within the data. These initial codes are represented as sub themes. The sub themes are then combined into overarching themes and data extracts for each theme are collated. The themes are named and then reviewed by checking links with the coded data extracts.

This framework did not address the reality of conducting previous investigations with strong similarities. I was already aware of themes that had worked within the pilot study but now had three new adults observing. I also had additional pupil perspectives to consider. I needed to be open to the possibility of new themes and additional or revised sub themes. I had to become very aware of Shapiro and Carlson's (2009) cautionary warning about using a pre-existing categorization system. This could be difficult to avoid with the large amounts of data collected. Changes made to the data sets will be included within my chapter on methods. This will illustrate how my pilot study offered guidance to themes and sub themes but did not hinder new ideas.

There are also different patterns of thematic analysis identified by Braun and Clarke (2014). When analysis has been guided by existing theory and theoretical concepts, it is classed as 'theoretical analysis'. Analysis that arises from the data itself is referred to as 'inductive analysis' which applies to this study. My process was complex, sometimes based on theories but also showing the inclusion of new sub themes identified directly from the data. The additional topics I needed to address within the literature review have already identified this issue.

## Summary

My ontology and epistemology positions identify with critical research. Historical realism recognises social, external forces alongside individual interpretations of reality. Learning is shown to be transactional and subjectivist, relying on dialogic methods, observation and interviewing. My

position has moved from critical theory to social justice with a greater emphasis on individual agency and collective change for equity and fairness. The concept of power fluidity was considered (Foucault, 1980) along with the importance of communication for mutual understanding and agreement (Habermas, 1987). Aspects of mindfulness methodology offered me as evaluator guidelines for deeper, dynamic connections with participants (Albrecht, 2016) and greater self-reflexivity (Lemon, 2017). Qualitative research allowed the process of mindfulness to be examined within a case study setting illuminating context, culture and dynamic relationships. Benefits and limitations for investigating children's perspectives have also been discussed. An evaluative democratic design (Kushner, 2017) has been explored for promoting social justice principles through fostering participation, collaboration and empowerment. This also gave the study a clear purpose for participants, the school, mindfulness in education and the research community. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) supplied a systematic and rigorous structure for examining findings, with room for flexibility.

## **Chapter 4 Methods**

### **Introduction**

Qualitative research on mindfulness in primary school settings has focused on children's or teachers' experiences of mindfulness and some view both perspectives, but all investigations I have found have been conducted by outside researchers (Appendix 1 p. 164). There are a small number of studies (McCabe et al, 2017: Thomas and Atkinson, 2017: Rix and Bernay, 2014) that have, in some way, evaluated a mindfulness programme and given suggestions for future developments, but do not express evaluation as their fundamental purpose. My position as teacher, mindfulness instructor and evaluator within an established mindfulness primary programme, focusing on fairness and equity in education, made my evaluation, as far as I know, a unique endeavour. This chapter investigates methods in relation to answering the evaluation questions. Detailed explanation and analysis of diaries, interviews, concept maps and focus group discussion will follow. Adult and child participants will be detailed in relation to who they are and how they were recruited, along with ethical considerations and methods used for informed consent. Perceived problems and method modifications will be explored. New developments for data analysis will conclude this chapter.

### **Evaluation Questions**

The investigation was initially planned and adapted in response to my perception of power issues within relationships. I hoped these changes would ensure greater equity for all participants, highlighted by Atkins and Duckworth (2019) as a key premise for socially just investigations. The core question 'To what extent can the programme be deemed as successful, particularly taking into account the views of participants?' emphasised the requirement to fully investigate participant views, while recognising the bias that my own perspective could bring to interpretation. The question can also be seen to support a social justice perspective as participants are the primary focus. The term 'participant' initially included pupil discussion groups, observing teaching assistants and the mindfulness facilitator. The children in the class were not all considered active participants, although their reactions to the lessons would be referred to in my diary, as were the comments of others, such as the class teacher and head teacher.

To establish what information would be gathered to evaluate success and supply evidence to possibly support the continuation of Paws b, I needed to recognise the pedagogical effectiveness of the programme content in relation to the specific aspects of mindfulness identified within the literature review. As I was investigating a potential moral framework for mindfulness, I also needed

to consider whether this programme reflected social justice principles, while maintaining socially just epistemological and methodological approaches. A further question 'To what extent have children engaged with social justice principles through the programme?' was added to establish whether children were able to recognise and identify with the concepts of increasing personal power and awareness of actions, within their social groups, that encouraged fairness and compassion with others. Of course, participants were not at first aware of this aspect of the investigation although, through the course of the programme, both adults and children began to recognise and relate to social justice principles. The final question 'In what ways might the programme be further established and improved?' allowed my experiences to combine with ideas offered by adults and children, both within the lessons and through focus group discussion. These views formulated a series of recommendations for the Mindfulness in Schools Project and our school to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the programme.

Qualitative methods, classically associated with case studies, needed to offer opportunities for collaboration thus encouraging possibilities for empowerment and making voices heard. According to Atkins and Duckworth (2019) methods, together with constant reflection on researcher relationships with participants, should avoid the risk of silencing voices. It was important to use more than one interpretative practice in the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013) and consistently recognise that no single perspective should take precedent over another (Atkins and Duckworth, 2019). I used a combination of methods to investigate participant views from both within and outside of active engagement in this programme.

## **Evaluation Methods**

My contribution to the evaluation was a weekly diary which included observations and personal reflections of what happened during each lesson. As the mindfulness facilitator I was focused on taking the lessons so had to be aware of potential disadvantages in maintaining a questioning and reflective stance. According to Mertens (2014) there is a wealth of information that can be retrieved from a lesson, such as physical environment, social environment, programme activities, participant behaviours, informal interactions, and unplanned activities, along with body language and non-verbal cues. There is also the consideration of what does not happen. Additional adult observations could be cross-checked to add information and eliminate inaccurate interpretations. However, when it comes to observations an individual's personality and feelings on the day can colour what is focused on and noticed at a particular time (Kessler, 2015). Individual perceptions did lead to different interpretations of a lesson for multiple observers. Heightened present moment awareness,

through joining in with the mindfulness activities, could encourage observers to view what was actually happening, away from the mind's interpretation of reality.

Another purpose of this data source was to aid personal reflection. Reflective practice is an important dimension of qualitative research and can be a powerful tool for monitoring and evaluation (Macbeth, 2018). Cain (2012) used a researcher diary when investigating children's perspectives of mindfulness, but this was only for the purpose of reflexivity and comments were not used as raw data. According to Mertens (2014) the researcher is the instrument for collecting data so there needs to be a focus on who the researcher is and what values, assumptions, beliefs and biases they bring to the study. My diary was an opportunity to continually reflect on my position to determine my impact on the study's data and interpretations. Given my combined facilitator-evaluator roles, diary entries were used both as a tool for reflexivity and a source for facilitator views. This was also an ongoing activity allowing data to be collected throughout the investigation, unlike Thomas and Atkinson (2017) who investigated views once the programme had finished.

Semi-structured interviews were used to investigate adult views at the beginning and end of the programme. Mertens (2014) believed interviews should be minimally structured but pre-chosen questions can be used to ensure coverage of important issues. I used questions as a guide in both interviews (Appendix 2 p. 169). Braun and Clarke (2014) also saw interviews as being partly planned and partly spontaneous. For them, the researcher's ability to show interest and appear non-judgemental are important factors. The interviews used in my study fit with a 'discursive democracy-orientated evaluation' (Hanberger, 2006 p. 28). The weekly discussions with adults, I hoped, would follow 'participatory democracy-orientated evaluation' (Hanberger, 2006 p. 28) when experiences of each lesson would be shared and everyone could contribute personal anecdotes related to mindfulness from outside of the classroom. The final adult interviews could be seen in the light of Kushner's (2017) evaluative interview. The questions here were more probing asking for information, evidence and judgement from participants.

Socially just investigations examine power issues within relationships, an important concept emphasised continually by Atkins and Duckworth (2019) and Griffiths (1998). Interview is a common technique for data gathering, but as Griffiths highlighted, standard research texts can miss the fundamental factors related to how the interviewer and interviewee construct each other. This depends heavily on the self-identifications of the interviewer. Griffiths saw race, gender, social class, sexuality and disability as salient in any human interaction and thus affecting communication during

an interview. I agree with this point but would widen considerations to age, perceived expertise and roles within school. I recognised that I may have been seen as the expert in the initial interview. Continuing participation in the lessons and data collection could fundamentally change how participants viewed their own knowledge, expertise and, to some extent, balance the power here. I will explore the differences between initial and final interviews within the discussion in Chapter 7. I will also discuss differences in each adult participant's position and possible reconstruction of self-identity. This point also refers to weekly discussions with adults and interactions with children. It is my personal opinion that, while texts can supply advice on how to conduct interviews and manage group discussions, it is more important for an evaluator to always come across as approachable and genuine in any social exchange.

I used concept maps for adult participants to organise and represent knowledge visually. Concept maps have multiple uses including planning projects, reducing data, analysing themes and presenting findings (Daley, 2004). I read through transcripts from the adult participant interview and reduced these to important statements or points on post it notes. Adult participants then used the notes to create a map of ideas, adding additional information if required. Maps were reviewed after the final interview and changes were then made, if necessary, in light of their experiences of the study. A concept map reduces the data to a manageable form without losing embedded meaning (Daley, 2004). It also allows the researcher to focus on participants' meanings and the connections made across different concepts (Wheeldon and Faubert, 2009). Kinchin et al. (2010) studied concepts maps to enhance research interviews and discussed possible uses which included a retrospective interview probe, a checking method for evidence, a useful display for data and a form of coding. I was keen to use such a method to enhance opportunities for participants to reflect on and share their evaluations.

I was unsure how adult participants would respond to this type of practical activity. While constructing a concept map could be viewed as creative and empowering, the novelty may have created feelings of nervousness and unease. I felt that by supplying participants with what I considered important interview statements, they would feel more confident discussing their views of the points selected to begin the process of construction. There were initial plans to incorporate the use of children's concept maps within focus group discussions. I decided not to include this activity due to the size of the groups and the challenges certain children experienced when expressing themselves in writing or drawing.



Braun and Clarke (2014) saw focus groups as a very useful method for rich data collection but also discussed logistical drawbacks, such as time taken to plan and run. Preparation was highlighted as essential. As with interviews, a guide was needed to cover the range of issues that I wanted the group to discuss, but this time my questions would act as prompts to elicit general discussion. Following 'discursive democracy-orientated evaluation' (Hanberger, 2006 p. 28), my questions were planned to stimulate the children to respond to each other rather than only answer my questions. Barbour (2013) stated that focus groups could facilitate more rounded responses through the use of multiple voices. Of course, this could also have had a negative impact if certain children are prone to dominating discussions. Cohen et al. (2011) believed that focus groups could be less intimidating to pupils but, in my experience, this very much depended on group dynamics and the individuals involved.

Goalen (2013) chose group interviews as a way of making the process less intimidating for her child participants. This investigation was different to mine as focus group discussion only took place after the programme had finished. Goalen did, however, supply a useful account of issues when working with children. These included children providing answers that they felt the researcher wanted to hear, being influenced by what their peers said and how they felt on the day. While these points were constantly reflected upon, my study involved ongoing dialogue with the focus groups and I benefitted from insider knowledge through teaching these children on a weekly basis. My diary was used to note particular events and, during analysis, allowed me to review evidence within its context. Open questions, careful use of tone and gentle encouragement over time helped develop relationships built on mutual trust and honesty. Planned phrases emphasised my curiosity and established non-judgemental responses such as 'Can you say more...' before collaboratively exploring reasons for certain comments. Developing a democratic evaluator relationship with participants will be explored in greater detail during the discussion in Chapter 7.

## **Participants**

The Paws b programme was specifically written for children between the ages of seven and 11 years. The pilot study, with a previous Year 3 class, allowed me to trial methods in obtaining and analysing adult perceptions. This study took place outside the established timetable on a day when I did not teach. The classroom teaching assistant had already expressed an interest in the study and the class teacher was happy to offer six hours to this additional subject.

I teach all Key Stage 2 classes, in my role as a support teacher covering planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA). For this evaluation I decided to present the mindfulness sessions within my established timetable. This prevented the possible reluctance of some teachers to dedicate extra hours in an already busy timetable of subjects. I decided to approach the same Year 3 class teacher whose class had taken part in the pilot study, as he was already familiar with the programme. Although this teacher would not be present in the lessons or directly part of the study, he agreed to observe the children in his lessons and feedback any significant conversations and changes in behaviour, as he had done during the pilot study.

While some researchers (Thomas and Aitkinson, 2017; Goalen, 2013) have viewed older primary children as more preferable for the analysis of pupil perceptions, evidence from some studies (Anderson, 2002; Klenberg et al., 2001) indicated that children in Year 3 are usually in the process of developing skills in self-regulating behaviours and have the ability to act as observers of their own thoughts. My pilot study had also shown that programme content was appropriate for seven- and eight-year-olds. Children were able to articulate their knowledge, thoughts, feelings and opinions clearly and with detail.

For this investigation, the class consisted of 30 pupils, 17 girls and 13 boys, predominately from White British heritage. The children had initially been told about the evaluation and were given a letter explaining the study in child accessible language (Appendix 5 p. 172). Those who wished to participate were asked to complete a child consent form and given an information letter for parents (Appendix 6 p. 173), along with a parental consent form. The children who returned the forms were invited to attend a weekly, one-hour mindfulness after school club. Twelve girls and five boys attended and were split into two groups. One group would take part in conversations lasting 30 minutes, while the other group spent time on craft or movement mindfulness activities in another room so as not to disturb the discussion.

The class-based teaching assistant, named Blue, readily agreed to participate in the study. She had taken part in two staff training sessions and had an interest in mindfulness through therapeutic personal use in the past. Blue would observe the lesson, then supervise the after-school craft and movement activities. We could then talk about the sessions after the children went home. Developments arose when Blue's work and family commitments changed. She was finding it increasingly difficult to attend the lessons and after school sessions. I asked if she needed to leave

the study but she assured me that she wanted to continue. Her focus, however, became sporadic and feedback was brief.

Brooklyn, another teaching assistant, expressed an interest in the evaluation. After discussion with Blue, I invited Brooklyn to observe the lessons. At the beginning I had not considered her an active participant as she was working with another year group, but she was keen to offer feedback. I spoke to Blue and Brooklyn about the benefits of including another observer in the lessons, and they both agreed. Brooklyn, however, could not attend the after-school club due to other school commitments on that day. She also felt uneasy about taking part in an initial interview. While comfortable talking about her initial reactions to lessons, she preferred to write down her responses after time contemplating her answers. The introduction of a lesson feedback sheet (Appendix 7 p. 174) helped both Blue and Brooklyn increase their focus on observations and aided discussions, when time was found to talk.

During this time my head teacher became a great support and confidant. There were increasing opportunities to discuss potential issues and emerging themes. As her interest and involvement grew, she expressed a wish to become part of the evaluation. Griffiths (1998) discussed the social justice principle of researchers being prepared to change their own beliefs and values. This is an example of such a change in my own expectations. I had not anticipated this level of assistance. To include the head teacher would be an opportunity for gathering views from senior leadership, a participant who was not observing the lessons but could potentially see changes within the school and with the children involved. Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford (1997) believed that researchers should look for opportunities to challenge leaders from within their own discourses, for the promotion of social justice. Challenge is too strong a word to describe our interactions, but working co-operatively with her not only added another viewpoint to the evaluation, but also heightened the school's focus on the initiative.

Another addition to adult participation came in response to Brooklyn's changing circumstances. She confided that she was becoming overwhelmed with increasing classroom and extracurricular responsibilities. Our discussions were significantly reduced, due to Brooklyn's additional roles. At this point I asked Anne to join our evaluation team. She was another Year 3 teaching assistant who had been present during mindfulness lessons with another class. By lesson eight Anne had completed an initial interview, created a concept map and was adding observations to the data. Brooklyn left employment the week of the last lesson, but did make contact to say she had enjoyed

the investigation and felt confident to take part in a final interview. She was then able to construct her own concept map.

Focus Group Children		Other children referred to in the data	Adults Contributors
Girls	Boys	JB TB BB IB (Initial of first name and B for boy)  AG (Initial of first name and G for girl)	Teaching Assistant Observers
Ashley Brittany Burger Christina Delilah Eliza Heather Luna Magic Power Rachel Sponge Bob	Black Knight Jeff B Jo Ninja Vergil		Blue Brooklyn Ann
			Head teacher
			Additional comments from
			Class teacher Parent of JB Support assistant for JB

Table 1- Final list of participants and children referenced within the data

A table displaying methods used for each adult participant and the pupil focus group can be found at Appendix 8 (p. 175)

## Ethics and Informed Consent

The OU's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approved my outline and proposed methodology for this evaluation. Floyd and Arthur (2012) offered a useful analysis of both the external issues of gaining ethics approval and deeper level of ethical and moral dilemmas that insider researchers have to address. These related to insider knowledge, on-going personal and professional relationships with participants, conflicting professional and researcher roles and anonymity. The literature encouraged me to consider the delicate balance between the needs of all participants throughout data collection and additional time commitments to the evaluation.

The main query relating to my initial HREC application was concern about possible coercion in the recruitment of staff. During the pilot study the adult participant, Sadie, had approached me after the first staff training session to ask whether she could be part of the evaluation. She had a personal interest in mindfulness and a further interest in research through completing a degree in child development and education. Rossman and Rallis (2010) emphasised that decisions are ongoing, demanding iterative reflection and action. I chose to share my thoughts and data with Sadie and she was an active, enthusiastic participant throughout the process. Even with a pseudonym, anonymity

could not be assured, as Sadie was the only teaching assistant in school to witness the programme. Now other classes have been taught Paws b, adult participants have a greater chance of retaining anonymity.

Blue was initially approached by me as she had been working with this class for two years and knew the children well. She seemed keen to participate and received payment by the school for her time spent in the after-school club. Blue was studying for an NVQ Level 2 Teaching Assistant Certificate and saw participation as an opportunity to aid her own studies. The teaching assistants who joined during the evaluation were also approached but, as with Blue, were happy to share their views. Neither Brooklyn nor Ann could supervise the after-school club due to other school commitments so, when Blue left this role, another teaching assistant took up this duty but was not part of the study. The class teacher, support worker and parent sought me out to share their experiences through informal conversations but gave consent for their views to be included within the evaluation. The head teacher expressed a desire for participation in the study. While she had not observed the lessons, she spoke regularly to focus group children and wanted this data to be included within the evaluation, along with her personal views. She gave written consent to be interviewed and, as with the other adults, had the opportunity to check and revise transcription.

Braun and Clarke (2014) discussed issues in relation to interpretations of experience and issues of representation as ethical issues in qualitative research. Researchers/evaluators are in danger of telling a different story from that told by participants. Analysis involves interpretations informed by particular subjective and theoretical lenses thus data from the words of participants can change. I was keen to share results with all adult participants, allowing for opportunities to discuss similar and different views. I also consistently reflected on my position within the pupil focus group. Moving my position further towards 'discursive democracy-orientated evaluation' (Hanberger, 2006 p. 28) would reduce this potential ethical dilemma with both children and adults.

I was aware that while my insider status conferred access and information, my position as a teacher within the school could act as a constraint, possibly limiting who would be willing to participate and what they felt comfortable revealing (Floyd and Arthur, 2012). During this study there were no constraints in recruitment for either adults or children. There were, however, issues in participation and retention. These events were addressed in detail within the previous section relating to participants.

I achieved written consent from the head teacher for both the pilot study and this investigation (Appendix 3 p. 170). She was supportive of this initiative and knew the school would remain anonymous during and after the evaluation. I did, however, need to consider that the school could view the evaluative role of this study as an accountability exercise (Hanberger, 2006). Floyd and Arthur (2012) discussed tensions that can arise between roles as a professional practitioner and researcher. I decided to separate my roles as evaluator in the study and evaluator for the school. While both positions are linked, reports varied in detail and focus. My thesis linked theories and involved a critical stance. The report to senior management contained elements of criticality within the situation analysis, but focused more on the practical issues of implementation and development in an action plan format. These roles and their related reports were not in conflict as I had carefully considered and catered for differences in purpose and audience.

My evaluation required adult observer consent (Appendix 4 p. 171) along with separate child and parent assent. This was to avoid coercion of children by parents. It was made clear that all participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw up to the date that data transcription began. Ethical issues relating to focus groups have been explored by Braun and Clarke (2014). There was a potential development in children wishing to leave the group, especially as these meetings took place after school. This could have been complex in relation to the interactive nature of discussions and the data generated from them. Some attendance was erratic, but through the 11 weeks of data collection there was no child who expressed a wish to leave the evaluation. There was also the issue of confidentiality and disclosure to consider. It was imperative that I highlighted the need for confidentiality before and after the group discussions. While this may seem like an unrealistic expectation to some, my PSHE lessons can contain sensitive, personal issues brought up within class discussion. As such the children are very familiar with the requirement of confidentiality during my lessons. Disclosures, if made, would have been followed up through the school safeguarding procedures, however there were no events that required this procedure.

## **Developments from the Pilot Study**

The previous year I had trialled my methods and analysis through investigating adult views of the Paws b programme. I taught six lessons, each lasting an hour, observed by the class-based teaching assistant. Appendix 11 (p. 179) displays pilot study themes of content, awareness, connection and suggestions for programme development with their relevant sub themes. Each sub theme was classified relating to whether they were perceived as successful (1), indicating some progress/mixed reactions (2) or displayed issues to be addressed (3). The final theme contained suggestions for

programme development and change, which came through evaluations agreed by us both. I have included detail on pilot study findings and analysis here as a precursor to the next chapter, illustrating its historical background and context. The current study was the second time I had taught the Paws b programme and initial changes were made based on pilot study analysis. Lessons became shorter but spread over a longer period of eleven weeks. There were new opportunities planned for children to actively evaluate the programme through a pupil focus group. I was also keen to include weekly feedback within the lessons by directly questioning children at the beginning and end of sessions.

This time my strategy for identifying themes did not fully reflect Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggested process as this was not fundamentally the starting point for my investigation. The main themes developed during my pilot project had resonated strongly with the mindfulness literature studied and clear links were already established between theory and praxis. While most sub themes resonated with the new data certain amendments and additions were made as analysis took place.

I associated the pilot study primarily with critical theory and recognised changing relationships from teacher and class to a mindfulness facilitator offering children greater opportunities for choice. My later study of social justice opened up opportunities to investigate how the children were relating to one another and how negotiation between individuals and the class took place. There was now a constant emphasis on encouraging personal choice while making sure the choices of others were acknowledged and respected. An important change related to the additional sub theme of awareness of others, included to reflect the new emphasis on social justice. While connection had been an established theme since the pilot study, the relationship focus was initially between the children and facilitator. The awareness of others, although classed as an aspect of mindfulness in my study, can be seen to directly lead towards connection of individuals to the collective. There is a need to understand other people's thoughts and feelings to feel a connection with them, and to relate to how your behaviour affects them. This promotes the negotiation of individual needs to group needs. (Griffiths, 1998)

While not a separate theme within this study, the data highlighted some significant changes in my relationship with the adult observers and specific children. This evidence of change wove itself through all themes and relates in many ways to social justice (Griffiths, 1998), critical theory (Mertens, 2014) and democratic evaluation (Kushner, 2017). It must however be noted that participants were not initially aware or consulted about all the focuses for this study. Participants

recognised that they were evaluating the programme in terms of effectiveness, possibilities for development and the benefits of mindfulness for children. Growing awareness and consideration of others helped develop understanding of informed personal choice and social justice principles, which could be identified through participant evaluations over the course of the programme. There were issues in classifying sub themes as successful, indicating some progress/mixed reactions or needing further development. The current study was more in depth and included a greater number of participants. As such evaluations could no longer be classified so simplistically. A closer analysis of detailed description now allows the reader to recognise elements of success and possible issues with the programme.

I began data coding, for this investigation, using highlighter pens to identify themes in the diary, interviews and focus group discussion transcripts. I had decided not to use a computer program, such as Nvivo, as I felt that working with hard-copy data and physically marking the text allowed me to easily go back to review the context in which the data was produced. The pilot study had already illuminated four themes relating to programme content, awareness, connection and future progress. I became familiar with the transcripts by reading and re-reading, then searched the data and highlighted sections in colours chosen for each theme (See Appendix 12 p. 180). While the previous study's sub themes gave me a guide for this investigation, ongoing reading allowed me to develop and categorise new sub themes, with written abbreviations, on the transcripts. Each section of highlighted text was then copied and pasted into tables of themes for each data source (Appendix 13 p. 181). Text within these tables was placed into sub themes, moved and edited as groups were refined and changed. Eventually I had three sets of tables incorporating diary, interview and discussion data for each of the four themes. Concept maps were examined to add to the adult interview data. Ongoing reference to the raw data allowed me to annotate these tables of themes for final construction and analysis of my findings.

## **Summary**

Discussion, lesson feedback sheets, interviews and concepts maps were methods used to investigate adult observer views throughout the programme. I have also included data from informal conversations with the class teacher, a special educational needs support worker, a parent and an interview with the head teacher, at her request. Pupil views were collected through the focus group discussions but I have also drawn on observations within the lessons and conversations, mostly initiated by the children, around school. Ethical approval has been discussed and included a number of situations where I needed to reflect on insider ethical decisions when attempting to balance the



needs of all participants. Open discussion, honesty, flexibility and negotiation have all been key factors within this complex process. I have illustrated changes and adaptations made to methods as the investigation progressed, and also recorded my own preconceptions which changed through time.

My analysis began during the pilot study with themes and sub themes that arose from the data. These themes became a guide during this evaluation but as my analysis continued, I began to make changes as new information was highlighted and categorized. As new ideas came to light, I extended my literature search to additional subjects and theories. Findings will be displayed and analysed within the next chapter and will address each evaluation question consecutively. My questions focused on participant responses, however deep investigation of experiences within this case study supplied information that delved below the surface to investigate possibilities of how and why these evaluations were made (Yin, 2009). These questions and theories were not originally envisaged but now need to be acknowledged and explored. This will be discussed in greater detail in my discussion chapter.

## Chapter 5 Findings and Analysis of Themes 1 and 2

### Introduction

Findings and analysis have been presented together within three sections, investigating specific themes to answer each evaluation question over two chapters. The relationships between questions, themes and sub themes are displayed in the table below, although a more in-depth analysis of the second question will rely on data being drawn from the other themes, as addressed in the conclusion.

Question	Theme	Sub themes
To what extent can the programme be deemed as successful, taking into account the views of participants?	<b>Content of Programme</b> Aspects of successful pedagogy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children's engagement</li> <li>2. Perceived learning</li> <li>3. Challenges in lessons</li> </ol>
	<b>Awareness</b> Aspects of mindfulness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness of self (which includes previous sub themes of breath, present moment, thoughts and feelings)</li> <li>2. Awareness of personal choices</li> <li>3. Awareness of others</li> </ol>
To what extent have children engaged with social justice principles through the programme?	<b>Connection</b> Aspects of Social Justice to include children's developing awareness of their roles within communities to inform actions that consider themselves and others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher/facilitator relationship with children</li> <li>2. Relationship between self and others</li> <li>3. Experiences outside mindfulness lessons</li> </ol>
In what ways might the programme be further established and improved?	<b>Programme Development</b> Aspects for initiative progress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adaptability in school</li> <li>2. Effects on social and emotional behaviours</li> <li>3. Issues, changes and ways forward</li> </ol>

Table 2- Evaluation Questions, Themes and Sub Themes

Each theme is introduced with a summary. Each sub theme combines data, analysis and the literature to illustrate findings. The data is presented from diary entries (I refer to myself as evaluator), adult perspectives (from diary, post lesson discussion, observation sheets, interviews and concept maps) and concludes with pupil views (from diary data, including observations, informal conversations and focus group transcripts). Data also comes from the head teacher interview along with class teacher, SEN support worker and parent comments from my diary entries. These adults did not observe lessons but had ongoing contact with the children. Each example of data will indicate which lesson and date it relates to. Eleven lessons covered the six programme themes. Lesson summaries can be found in Appendix 14 (p. 182) and concept maps in Appendix 15 (p. 184).

Data from concept maps is represented by figure number. Teaching assistants and focus group children are referred to by pseudonyms. Initials are used for other children alongside B for boy and G for girl.

## **Theme 1- Content of Programme**

Programme objectives cover attitudes such as curiosity, kindness, acceptance and gratitude, as well as techniques for increasing attention and decreasing reactivity. These qualities support the importance of nurturing emotional wellbeing and mental health in children (De Souza, 2006) and resonate with what I have identified as important aspects of mindfulness. The following section will evaluate how effective the programme was at teaching these objectives and engaging the children. My analysis will investigate children's engagement, perceived learning and challenges, using my own, observing adult and participating children's perspectives. Theories relating to pedagogical effectiveness will be drawn upon.

### ***Children's Engagement***

I saw the children enjoying particular activities, including learning scientific words for parts of the brain, watching videos, pictures of kittens and puppies, exploring Weebles<sup>2</sup> wobbling and eating chocolate mindfully. There was also constant reference to discussions promoted by these resources, for example:

There was lots of good discussion on how Tom Daley was feeling, during and after his dive. (Evaluator Diary 31.10.18 Lesson 1)

The whole class seemed really interested in interpreting Captain Hook's responses to the sound of the ticking clock. (Evaluator Diary 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

My comments were supported by the teaching assistants' observations. Blue spoke about the children's anticipation before the first lesson as they were looking forward to something different. She saw the lack of writing as more informal than other lessons but felt that the children were comfortable with this. Blue particularly enjoyed the lesson which involved the Weebles. She

---

<sup>2</sup> Trademark for several lines of Hasbro Playskool toys. Tipping an egg shaped Weeble causes a weight located at the bottom centre to be lifted off the ground. Once released gravity brings the Weeble back into an upright position.

remembered these from her childhood and related her memories to the excitement she saw in the children. Blue also enjoyed watching the children give one another compliments. She noted:

The children loved the Magic Mix activity. One child said to me “Gratitude means good attitude.” I thought that was great. (Blue 30.1.19 Lesson 11 observation sheet)

While Brooklyn was more aware of some restless behaviour, she also recognised the children’s excitement.

They had lots of ideas but often shouted out and interrupted each other. It was a brisk pace and the class really seemed to enjoy it.  
(Brooklyn 5.12.18 Lesson 6 observation sheet)

Ann also felt that the children were fully engaged throughout. She recognised opportunities built in for communicating thoughts and ideas. After the final lesson Ann commented on the excellent behaviour, how responsive the children were and how well they demonstrated knowledge from previous sessions.

In terms of engagement, interviews prior to the programme related to adults’ personal experiences of mindfulness. Brooklyn had the most reservations as she recollected her own negative experiences, involving prior therapies for anxiety and depression. She did however believe that even if children did not engage with mindfulness they would still benefit from increased awareness of their own emotional and social wellbeing. One of Blue’s initial concerns displayed in her concept map (Appendix 15 Fig. 1 p. 184) was that some children would disbelieve in the benefits, although her own experiences related to increased relaxation and encouraging self-love. Ann hoped that mindfulness would help children deal with the world around them. Her opinions revolved more around purpose rather than the hopes for positive, enjoyable experiences.

The adults’ final interview evaluations allowed us to establish overall impressions of the programme. There was a firm consensus on how much the class had enjoyed the lessons.

There was so much great discussion. They have clearly enjoyed and gained a lot from the programme. (Ann Final interview 6.2.19)

Brooklyn saw a number of children, mostly focus group participants, becoming advocates for mindfulness. She remarked that their positive attitudes spread and were a great influence for others. Brooklyn saw quite a dramatic difference in all the children.

They were so much more relaxed, attentive and brighter in themselves towards the end of the programme. I can't believe how keen they had become.  
(Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)

Overall, the focus group participants found the lessons interesting and enjoyable for a variety of reasons. Magic, Ashley, Brittany and Heather talked about excitement at learning about the different parts of the brain.

I think it's really exciting to know things about how your brain and your mind works.  
(Brittany 21.11.18 Lesson 4)

Physical activities, such as eating chocolate, along with mindfulness practices involving movement and bodily sensations were met with enthusiasm, for example:

I really like finger breathing. My finger went up and down. It was really relaxing and felt really tickly. (Jo 14.11.18 Lesson 3)

There was great interest in the Weebles when opportunities were available to explore playing with these toys. Luna did not enjoy the first Weeble lesson, however after exploring the toys she expressed enjoyment at her new knowledge, now linking the heavy, round Weeble's bottom to why it did not fall down. She spoke of wobbling both physically and with her concentration, relating how she could steady herself through greater awareness of her body.

Children expressed happiness when new concepts were embedded through activities. Eliza in Lesson 7 enjoyed FOFBOC (Feet on floor, bottom on chair) because it helped her concentrate. Delilah found the standing Paws b practice an enjoyable, calm activity. Heather enjoyed watching the flowers open and close through speeded up film as she was able to notice her breath and calm down.

Most of the videos were met with interest. Ashley's favourite part of Lesson 6 was watching the gymnast not giving up on her routine, even after falling. Magic said that the fight, flight and freeze films were very funny. Eliza liked the laughter on the train video because she believed the train would be a happy place to be. Christina enjoyed the Captain Hook film clip.

I liked it because it helped me understand thoughts, feelings; how you feel in your body and what you want to do. It's all connected like the hot cross bun diagram.  
(Christina 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

The pictures also engaged the children well. Burger (girl) enjoyed looking at pictures of puppies and thinking about how they might be feeling. Ninja, Vergil and Luna enjoyed watching Scooby Doo cartoons so were particularly pleased to see the picture of Scooby and Shaggy looking frightened (Appendix 16 Fig. 1 p. 187). Vergil made quick connections through prior knowledge.

Scooby Doo and Shaggy are always running away from monsters but the monsters are never real monsters. (Vergil 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

Ninja enjoyed making connections between pictures and personal experiences. When he saw the picture of a boy smiling at the top of a climbing frame (Appendix 16 Fig 2 p. 187) he said:

I like climbing frames and always reach the top. I feel good when I am there. This picture reminds me of those feelings. (Ninja 23.1.19 Lesson 10)

Magic also made quick connections between images, learning and enjoyment.

I loved learning about the kitten tangled up in the string. I feel like that when I get confused with my thoughts. (Magic 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

Adults recognised active pupil discussion; however pupil voice illuminated a deeper understanding of processes involved in teaching and learning. Data illustrated the engagement and enthusiasm that these processes promoted. Effective pedagogies utilise pupil voice (Niemi et al., 2010) and this was very much seen within lessons and focus group discussions.

Another appraised success was the use of resources to promote exploration and discussion. The pictures and videos captured the children's interest while exploring concepts and situations familiar to many children in the class. The importance of beginning from prior understanding has been affirmed by a range of research. CURRE's (2009) review of research emphasised the importance of real-world contexts, informal learning, arising from everyday situations (James and Pollard, 2011) while 'authentic learning' experiences (Pearce, 2016 p. 1) heighten engagement through the use of issues and applications that are both recognisable and meaningful to children. The data chosen here may give the appearance of unequivocal acceptance and success for the programme which some may see as unrealistic. There were many positive comments regarding the enthusiasm shown by this class, however some views relating to perceived learning and challenges, further on in this chapter, allow the evidence to achieve a more balanced evaluation.

## ***Perceived Learning***

This sub theme relates to children's knowledge and skills being developed to achieve lesson objectives. The materials were believed to be effective in helping to aid what the adults considered to be complex concepts and vocabulary. Throughout the lessons children showed greater understanding of concentration, focus and attention.

A quick recap of the previous lessons showed me that the children are not only remembering scientific vocabulary for parts of the brain but also concepts such as awareness, attention, concentration, the mind and how it can wander.

(Evaluator Diary 12.12.18 Lesson 7)

Change in attention was likened to torchlight, which can have a wide beam or smaller, sharper focus. Torchlight also created a useful cue for establishing whether the children were concentrating fully on the lesson. From the first lesson the class were introduced to the importance of concentration, practise and correcting mistakes to learn new things and improve. Wandering attention, wobbling feelings and grounding were introduced through exploration of the Weeble toys. Emotional and cognitive confusion was displayed through the shaking up of a glitter jar, while different feelings were explored through the children's own phrases written on post it notes relating to emotional and bodily feelings. Notes displayed descriptive phrases such as 'I am feeling excited and my body is fizzing.'

The learning developed further to investigate links between thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and actions. For this the children found the Disney film clip of an anxious Captain Hook an effective discussion prompt, along with the hot cross bun diagram.

The Hot Cross Bun analogy is working well. They are really thinking deeply about connections here. The way they described how feelings were perceived in the body showed real imagination. JB spoke of anger erupting like a volcano.

(Evaluator Diary 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

The mind's ability to make up stories was displayed through the story of Susie and how her age seemed to change as each section of information was added.

Susie's story really grabbed the attention of the class and the observing adults. We talked about the different opinions of who Susie was and how those opinions changed with additional information. (Evaluator Diary 9.1.18 Lesson 8)

Film clips displayed fight, flight and freeze successfully and pictures, such as a cat tangled up with string and a kite flying free (Appendix 16 Fig. 3 p. 187), were effective analogies for how mindfulness encourages clearer thought when our minds become confused.

Blue saw increasing understanding as the resources were explored. She remarked after Lesson 9 how many ideas the children were sharing when stimulated by the pictures. Ann was also impressed with the quality of discussion.

Children were also very responsive to the short example of someone who seemed to be laughed at on the playground. They understood that their initial reactions, when they don't know all the facts, can be misunderstandings. Children really seemed to understand Mark Twain's quote, 'Some of the worst things in my life never happened, ' and how to deal with situations in future. (Ann 16.1.19 Lesson 9 observation sheet)

Brooklyn recognised effectiveness when comparing the mind to a puppy.

When the puppy analogy was introduced the children all noticeably perked up and had more ideas. They seemed to understand better with a tangible example, something they could relate to. (Brooklyn 14.11.18 Lesson 3 observation sheet)

During the final interviews all adults continued to share positive comments on the quality and usefulness of the resources. Ann was the strongest advocate, describing the lessons as excellent, very child friendly and with good use of technology. She saw pace and flow working well to keep everyone engaged with plenty of opportunities for children to feed back. Blue appreciated the visual nature of the lessons, particularly the videos that displayed fight, flight and freeze. She stated that the torchlight was especially useful for displaying attention. Torchlight was then added to her final concept map (Appendix 15 Fig. 2 p. 184). Brooklyn recognised how useful the visuals were when the children found concepts difficult to understand. She saw children responding enthusiastically to familiar cartoon characters, such as Scooby Doo.

Brooklyn seemed more aware of challenges in teaching children this age. She saw concentration as a difficult concept to explain but found eating chocolate mindfully effective.

Bringing attention to eating was really good. They were learning to bring their focus in and actually noticed a lot of things that would have otherwise passed them by. (Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)



Ann also noticed the children thinking in greater depth than she would have previously expected from seven- and eight-year-olds. In her final interview she mentioned children recalling what they had learnt in previous lessons with growing awareness and consideration. Brooklyn saw children being given plenty of opportunities to reflect on their learning and was optimistic about what they had gained from the programme.

The kids have talked about techniques to calm themselves down, identify their feelings, increased awareness of their own emotions and actually greater awareness of other people's emotions too. I think that's really beneficial and a great development.  
(Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)

Brooklyn noticed significant developments throughout the programme.

Towards the end nearly all the class were making an effort to sit quietly. You could see them wriggling about, not in a fidgety way but as if they were concentrating on the sensations in their bodies. (Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)

The focus group displayed understanding through exploring the resources and these metaphors soon became useful vocabulary to relate to. The children used the puppy analogy to describe states of mind. Vergil saw the mind acting like a puppy when it gets excited and starts jumping up and down. He said, 'Sometimes it's hard to control a puppy just like it can be hard to control your mind.' Eliza related the puppy to the mind wandering off and recognised comparisons between training needs for both. Purser's (2019) strong disapproval of likening mindfulness to disciplining pets could be questioned here.

The torchlight beam was effective when children began to refer to attention and focus as their torchlight. Delilah said after Lesson 6 'I used mindfulness to pay attention to what you were saying. I kept thinking about the torchlight.' Magic, during the last lesson, admitted that she found some lessons challenging but had understood more when she kept her torchlight on me.

The Weebles, glitter jar and awareness of sensations in the body also produced effective learning. The children started to refer to the word wobble to help explain an unsettled state of mind. As Magic explained 'We can wobble in our bodies and wobble in our concentration.' Christina, after Lesson 5, spoke about feeling wobbly when her brother took her toys, referring to her mind as a shaken glitter jar. Vergil expressed confusion at the significance of Weebles but did see connections with the glitter jar and conscious breathing. He remarked 'When we breathe it calms us down, like the glitter jar, swirling then settling.'

Children made strong connections between wobbling and the use of FOFBOC sitting practice. Eliza after Lesson 6 remarked 'If we sit down on a chair and put our feet on the floor, we are doing FOFBOC; this helps us when we wobble. '

Ashley added:

When I was doing FOFBOC I was interested because I felt my body doing stuff that I hadn't noticed before. It was relaxing and really helped me concentrate.  
(Ashley 5.12.18 Lesson 6)

Brittany also understood benefits after experiencing this sitting practice.

I think it's good because you are concentrating on something. You're thinking about your feet on the floor and sitting on the chair. You take a minute away from your thoughts. That's sometimes really helpful. (Brittany 12.12.18 Lesson 7)

Vergil admitted he did not enjoy FOFBOC. He felt that the chair did not want him to sit on it. The children then had an interesting conversation regarding imagination. Brittany suggested that he may have just been feeling unsettled and wriggly. Vergil replied that the chair had felt alive but that might have been his attention wobbling because the chair felt wobbly. This was one of the examples of the children, within later lessons, working together to construct shared meaning from personal experience.

There were a number of resources that aided recollection. The film of the flowers opening and closing seemed a powerful image. As Brittany explained, 'The flower blooming reminds me of breathing when the petals opened and closed. ' Vergil recognised how memorable this image was, saying 'The flowers film could come back into your head and help you. ' Eliza shared a story about using the flowers image with effect.

When I had to go to sleep my mum switched off the light and I felt scared. I put the covers over me and concentrated on breathing. My hippocampus remembered the flowers and this helped me go to sleep. (Eliza 9.1.19 Lesson 8)

There were a number of positive references to learning about parts of the brain, their functions and neural change. Forbes (2019) made strong criticisms of educational programme links to neuroscience. He saw danger of focusing on brain activity whilst neglecting purposive, moral, changeable social action, almost seeming to be imply that these activities were mutually exclusive.

The technical vocabulary regarding parts of the brain was seen to be a useful tool, within this evaluation, making abstract concepts more accessible for children. Jo knew that the pre-frontal cortex helped with concentration. Eliza had referred to the hippocampus in relation to memory. Brittany talked about the insula and noticing facial expressions and body language to help recognise people's feelings. She recalled this after studying a picture a number of weeks later.  
(See Appendix 16, p. 187)

I learnt a lot about feelings because you showed us the Scooby Doo picture. I thought about when I am nervous and wondering what's going to happen to me next. Your face changes and your body look different. (Brittany 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

The amygdala warranted a long discussion within the focus group, stimulated by watching videos showing fight, flight and freeze reactions. A number of children co-constructed knowledge and understanding without my support after Lesson 9, as displayed in the transcript below.

Brittany: Your amygdala reacts when you get angry. We saw fight, flight and freeze.

Eliza: It's also if you are really nervous.

Heather: I knew what we were talking about with temper. I don't really understand about freeze but I can imagine wanting to run away.

Vergil: When you freeze you don't know what to do or say.

Heather: Oh, so it might be because you are embarrassed or angry.

Eliza: When you're frightened or angry and you don't know what to do the amygdala takes over and makes you do stuff you are not thinking about properly.

The image of the snowball was a strong metaphor for worries. Magic realised that a worry could start small then grow increasingly bigger like a snowball. The children also recognised the link between the storytelling mind and the imagination after Lesson 8. Here is another example of the children confidently exploring and sharing concepts together, without adult scaffolding or support.

Brittany: Your mind can make things up that won't actually happen.

Vergil: It's using your imagination to make things up.

Brittany: It depends on what your imagination is like. Isn't it about memories as well?

Ashley: When the clock started ticking it brought back Captain Hook's memories about the crocodile. It made me think about how my memories might make me scared.

Ashley had used the video from Captain Hook to help explain her perception of worry.

The head teacher recognised the children's excitement regarding the lessons, saying 'They wanted to tell me about mindfulness. They were always talking about the sessions.' She also saw a great impact for learning, referring to children opening up to self-reflection and adopting a more measured approach to life.

I have to say that I have been very impressed with the way the children have taken on mindfulness, the understanding and the insight they have into life in general. It's like a gateway to a level of understanding because it seems to take children through to a much deeper level of understanding than I would have expected.  
(Head teacher interview 2.5.19)

The data shows a significant development in children's knowledge and awareness of a variety of experiences alongside how mindfulness can be used to increase choice on how events are dealt with. Specific aspects of mindfulness and the roles these play in enhancing learning will be addressed at future point in this chapter, however theories on pedagogy and developmental psychology can begin to be drawn upon here.

The development of learning within this programme showed personal exploration, stimulated by resources and experiences promoted by lesson activities. This moved the children towards the acquisition of shared language through metaphors brought about by images, objects and scenarios. This language was constructed by programme content, 'scaffolded' (Wood et al. 1976 p. 98) by the adult facilitator, leading to understanding and use within the class.

## ***Challenges***

The evaluator diary data noted adult perceptions of challenges as well as successes.

Misunderstandings occurred as some concepts were introduced, although most of this data came from within the first five lessons. After Lesson 3, I noted how the ability to move focus (deliberately change the object of attention), along with the concept of 'autopilot' (a cognitive state in which you act without self-awareness) had caused some confusion. Responses to fear were also challenging to teach. The children seemed to understand anger but were at first bemused by the responses of flight and freeze. Blue shared my reservations in discussion after Lesson 7. Adult perceptions of children's confusion were, however, few in number and consensus was that a good level of understanding had been established by the end of the programme.

During her final interview Ann saw the children using mindfulness but more in terms of emotional regulation. She believed that use in learning behaviours and concentration still needed reinforcement. Blue saw a development in the children's thinking about mindfulness but for the majority of time saw them continue to react impulsively. Brooklyn, during her final interview, described these new forms of learning as subjectively developed from the self. She identified difficulties in recognising and assessing children's knowledge.

I think the concepts are quite deep and complex. I can only perceive what I think they are learning. I don't know what is actually inside their heads. They could be perceiving things as totally different, something else I don't see. They might also not be able to verbalise what they feel. They might have very complicated feelings and can't express or understand them. (Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)

Issues were raised relating to lesson content stifling important conversations. I made a significant number of references to the difficulty of facilitating smooth discussions within lessons, and some sitting practices needed to be cut short due to issues in covering content. The observing adults also remarked on this issue. Brooklyn, during Lesson 2, recognised that there was a lot of information to cover in a short space of time. She noticed that the children wanted to engage but not all had the opportunity to speak. I had kept the pace brisk, but some discussion had been cut short as a consequence. Once again, these comments came near the start of the programme and I felt that everyone developed skills in entering and facilitating discussion as the programme progressed. This was an important progressive development in relation to evaluative success. Brooklyn still highlighted on her concept map (Appendix 15 Fig. 5 p. 186) the challenges of presenting the lessons within the limited time.

Pupil discussion showed evidence of some misunderstandings which took time to resolve. The children were comfortable expressing confusion within the focus group, although I was intrigued that some individuals had not shared these issues within the lessons. Jo, Heather and Magic all admitted difficulties in seeing the relevance of torchlight and focus. Magic admitted 'I didn't get the bit about the light going backwards and forwards.' The puppy and mind comparison also provoked initial confusion. Heather said that she understood puppy training but did not understand how the mind could be trained. Both these concepts took time to become established and understood.

There were also difficulties raised by higher attaining children. Vergil had a particular issue with the open discussion. He did well in traditional lessons but said he now felt shy and reluctant to contribute. Vergil preferred answering questions in English and Maths as he felt more secure

recognising right and wrong answers. He was however quite an active participant within the focus group. Christina, another very able child, was also concerned. She said that she knew there were no right or wrong answers but still remained worried about getting things mixed up. These views promoted some interesting discussion on stepping out of your comfort zone, possibly something that had not yet happened for either child previously.

The three adult observers saw some programme objectives as challenging. Certain children did exhibit initial misunderstandings and additional periods of reflection were sometimes required. This process can be part of any new learning experience. An interesting feature related to the honesty the children displayed during the focus group discussion in comparison to responses within the lessons. While I encouraged open dialogue throughout, the current educational context needs to be considered here. Adelman (2018) explored children's increasing fear of failure encouraged by a highly competitive testing system. Higher attaining pupils such as Vergil and Christina had expressed concerns about participation and getting things wrong, although other children were comfortable expressing personal misunderstandings from the start. 'Growth Mindset' (Dweck 2017 p. 7) accepts mistakes as integral to learning. Tugend (2012) urged schools to increase focus on the process of learning rather than results. Whether or not current school cultures can adapt to such an ideology will be addressed within my discussion chapter. The fear of making mistakes was an issue that the children had raised through the evaluation. This links in with the programme's different approach of no answer being considered wrong. Literature relating to these topics will be explored when my role as mindfulness facilitator is investigated further on page 106.

Another challenge raised by adults and children related to the classroom environment. Brooklyn was very aware of what she saw to be the poor layout of the room (post lesson 2 discussion). The tables were in rows and the board difficult to see in places. The darkness and bright glare from the whiteboard made her both sleepy and prone to headaches. There were some children who had also remarked on their tiredness, restlessness and growing headaches. This may have been in response to the environment as opposed to content or activities. Blue and Ann, both based in Year 3, did not share her concerns as they may have become accustomed to the environment. I agreed with Brooklyn's opinions and if it had been my base would have changed the layout considerably to promote a more relaxed and interactional atmosphere.

The children expressed problems relating to classroom environment and limited space. Both Luna and Delilah found it hard to concentrate with children sitting so close. This became a useful

dilemma which led me to introduce the idea of a personal invisible bubble to increase children's awareness of space for themselves and others. Along with distraction created by others, children were also noticing uncomfortable physical feelings such as restless, tiredness and difficulties with finger breathing. There were also some issues in facing painful memories, such as Ninja being reminded of his grandmother's deceased dog. These problems which led to some children stating that they did not like some parts of the lesson were, however, useful starting points to discussions exploring what required acceptance and what they were able to change, either through perception or action.

In relation to classroom environments, with confined spaces and harsh lighting, there may be little that can be done within a 30-minute time frame for a visiting teacher. This issue did resonate with Campion and Rocco's (2009) findings of teacher and pupil views on the benefits of creating a relaxing environment. It must however be noted that Campion and Rocco were investigating meditation. Their definition of meditation sounded very similar to mindfulness, through the process of paying attention, often to breath, but there were significant differences. Holland (2004) clearly explained distinctions between mindfulness and other types of meditation which focuses on an object, thought, or sound to attain calm. Mindfulness emphasizes insight through awareness of the present moment and acceptance of all that arises through self-observation. As such the classroom environment should not distract from mindfulness practice. The children and I discussed issues openly and came up with strategies to help improve comfort and focus. Accepting what cannot be changed was an important focus throughout these lessons and will be looked at further within this discussion.

Boredom was not highlighted in any of the adult evaluations but became a regular theme when talking with the children. Boredom was sometimes mentioned when they found concepts challenging. Luna said the Weebles were boring, but after an opportunity playing with the toys her understanding and enjoyment increased. Christina expressed boredom, after Lesson 4 involving the mind puppy comparison and the introduction of autopilot, saying 'I can get a bit bored because I don't really know what you are talking about.' Her boredom also dissipated when objectives were fully understood. Ninja found Lesson 3 boring because he said Jo was distracting him. He admitted that he found learning hard because he was not concentrating. When we discussed whether he would find the content boring if he was paying attention, Ninja said he would use his torchlight next time. He enjoyed the activities the following lesson.

Heather said that the FOFBOC sitting practice was boring during Lesson 7. She also found some discussions long and frustrating. Brittany agreed but added that FOFBOC and focus on breathing could be helpful. Christina had noticed that sometimes a practice would feel boring to begin with but when she relaxed her feelings would change. As the sessions continued conversations around boredom began to develop. Eliza after Lesson 7 recognised that some people had different opinions on what was boring and what was not. She also said that it really depended on your mood at that moment. The children then began to think about the benefits to boredom. For instance, Brittany commented:

You might be able to take your mind off being bored, relax and enjoy it. Being bored might give you some thinking time to get some good ideas. Sometimes when we are bored, we start thinking about the past or the future but that might be in a good way. (Brittany 12.12.18 Lesson 7)

Eliza said she agreed with Brittany because she could feel bored when going to sleep. She had started to use this time to think of ideas about what she could do in the morning and said this relaxed her. By Lesson 9 Heather was starting to admit that boring was not always bad. She still found some activities boring but saw breathing as a useful skill for dealing with anger or sadness. Ashley also shared her new perspective on boredom.

In my mind, even if I do find it boring, I remember that I shouldn't find it boring because it is helpful. I want to be a mindfulness teacher, like you, because I have learnt from someone who is very good at it. I want to teach kids that being bored can be useful. Maybe being bored should be called being relaxed and you can get good ideas when you are not doing things all the time. (Ashley 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

Ten children within the focus group had referred to mindfulness lessons as boring at some point during discussions, although it should not be assumed that the children who did not talk about it did not feel it. There were a number of comments defending the lessons. Eliza, for example, remarked:

I think mindfulness is really, really not boring but some people say it is. Mindfulness is an interesting lesson. You learn about your mind, your brain and find out lots of stuff. I think we should use mindfulness more in our lives because it helps with everything. You can actually be happier. We can talk to one another about what happens to us and why we should use mindfulness. Talking helps us understand. (Eliza 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

The issue of boredom was brought up by the children when they found a new concept confusing and subsequently became disengaged from the learning. Children's frustrations, when participation in discussion was hindered, also stimulated expressions of boredom. Growing concerns related to



current contexts that young people are growing up in, such as Postman's (2011) issues with modern day entertainment and technology. Belton (2016) feared increasing depression and destructive behaviour when children lack the inner resources and responses to deal with boredom. This literature certainly supported the need to address the topic of boredom with children.

The lessons allowed us to discuss positive functions in an open and safe environment. Children showed a developing reflection, acceptance and resilience to activities that they had initially considered boring. Arzamarski (2019) viewed the experience of boredom during mindfulness created opportunities to discuss feelings. Boyce and Dormet, (2019) saw mindfulness as an effective way to befriend uncomfortable feelings, including boredom. Campion and Rocco (2009), however, classed children's expressing feelings of boredom as one of the negative effects in their findings. Within my study I would argue that the topic of boredom arose from some mindfulness practices but presented opportunities to discuss some positive functions of boredom and, as the data illustrates, some children's attitudes changed. Boredom will be explored within the discussion on page 128 and suggestions for openly addressing this within the lessons will be discussed further during the conclusion.

## **Theme 2- Awareness**

Theme 2 investigates how the practice of mindfulness was perceived by adults and children, which continues the evaluation of the programme. The development of awareness is a fundamental part of mindfulness. While Holland (2004) gave a useful definition of the specifics of mindfulness in comparison to other meditation practices, Burdick (2014) illustrated the process of mindfulness as awareness of surroundings, awareness of breath, awareness of senses, awareness of the mind, awareness of others even to awareness of everything.

This data starts with the sub theme of awareness of self which includes breath, bodily sensations, thoughts and feelings. Awareness of personal choices is then developed. This is in relation to reframing one's mind set, linking to the concept of recognising subconscious thought programmes and the ability to break these cycles if behaviours are unwanted (Lipton, 2005). Choice relates strongly to the critical scholar, Freire (1968) whose work encouraged the consideration of authenticity and legitimacy in personal attitudes and values through a critical analysis of reality. Children should be able to transform circumstances through the recognition of their own agency although, as highlighted by the Serenity Prayer (Niebuhr, 1934), identifying and accepting what cannot be changed is also necessary.

The last sub theme in this section, addressing awareness of others, needs careful consideration in relation to its nexus between the first and second evaluation question. The strong connection between awareness of others and connection to others will be investigated later on through mindfulness and social justice literature.

### ***Awareness of Self***

My observations of children developing awareness of breath to anchor themselves in the present moment began from the very beginning of the programme when they appeared very settled through counting their breaths for a minute. By Lesson 3 the children were able to independently recall the importance of awareness of breath and show sustained concentration. Diary comments included my thoughts around lengthening this exercise as the class seemed to be enjoying it so much.

The Paws b standing practice seemed an effective exercise in developing an awareness of breathing and bodily sensations, together with encouraging a feeling of being settled and grounded. FOFBOC was also successful in encouraging grounding, not so much with the breath but through physical awareness. The additional breathing practices, introduced through the following weeks, were met with mixed reactions by some children, but by the end of the programme I noticed that many children had established their own favourites.

The awareness of the present moment was introduced in Lesson 4 with the discussion how our minds can travel back to the past or into the future. This needed more reflection through careful questioning during Lesson 5. The following lesson brought a useful opportunity to discuss dwelling on the past when JB, a boy diagnosed with autism, spoke about still being upset by something that had happened in the morning. A number of children at this point suggested breathing practices so he could focus on the present moment. The following lesson JB shared his success with finger breathing to prevent him dwelling on previous upsetting experiences.

During lessons the adult observers recognised changes in behaviour when children concentrated on breathing. After Lesson 2 Blue remarked that the children had quickly noticed their breath and this had aided their concentration. Both Blue and Brooklyn had also noticed that Jo, a boy recently diagnosed as experiencing ADHD, settled very quickly in response to focusing on breath, especially the sensations of finger breathing. During Week 7 the class teacher told me how much the children enjoyed speaking about the mindfulness activities, in particular the breathing exercises, which they explained helped them increase attention and feel calm. The most common activity mentioned was

'three deep breaths'. This was not an exercise introduced by Paws b, but was referenced by the children on many occasions within lessons and during focus group discussion.

Awareness featured significantly in all final interviews with the three adult observers. In terms of breath and the present moment Ann saw children who were anxious, angry or unsettled focus on different parts of the body and, together with breathing, increase present moment awareness to allow time for thinking. Brooklyn offered another insightful observation when she mentioned the many times children had referred to breathing and displayed a holistic understanding of the connections between breath, present moment, thoughts, feelings and actions. She commented, 'I think they took it in as a whole.' Blue added breathing to her concept map, along with torchlight. She explained that she felt breathing to be particularly significant along with understanding feelings.

All 17 children spoke of connections between awareness of breath and concentration. Jo confirmed the adult observations, after Lesson 3, by saying that he found it hard to stop fidgeting in lessons but breathing helped him concentrate to get in a working mood. Heather spoke of being distracted during the focus group by another girl. She was trying not to laugh but took three deep breaths. She then felt she could concentrate more on what was being said.

There were also connections made between noticing the breath and being calm. Twelve children referred to the usefulness of noticing breathing when talking about experiences outside of the lessons. As well as concentration, there were anecdotes about situations involving worry, anger and bravery. This will be discussed in detail during the second question, explored in the following chapter. Brittany, after the final lesson, made an interesting observation which showed a deeper understanding of the purpose of breath.

I think some people don't really use mindfulness completely, they just concentrate on breathing. I used to breathe and call it mindfulness but now I know that it is more than just breathing. Breathing can help you be brave or calm you down. It's not just about breathing; it's about paying attention to lots of things as well.  
(Brittany 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

Data regarding increased awareness of the present moment was more difficult to recognise. I believe the children were developing this in more subconscious ways through focus on breath and knowledge of past and future thinking. There was an opportunity to see a distinctive change in perception when Ashley and Eliza described their mixed emotions while playing in the snow. They had been enjoying making snowmen but also expressed regret that the sun had come out and would

melt the snow. Eliza said, 'Like Ashley, I feel sad. The snow will definitely go soon but we need to enjoy it while it is here. I don't want to waste time thinking about the snow melting while it is still here. '

Nine children said the breathing exercises were enjoyable and easy to remember, but there is also a very important role that the awareness of breathing plays in mindfulness practice. Dorjee (2010) made useful distinctions between scientific and religious dimensions of mindfulness, while Holland (2004) defined differences between mindfulness and other types of meditation. The starting point that they both referred to was that of present moment awareness. Breath plays an important role in anchoring an individual's attention to the present moment through its ongoing availability. Ergas (2019) emphasised the importance of present moment awareness in mindfulness. The issue of gently bringing the mind back to the present was addressed in the programme and data shows that this was acknowledged, to a certain extent, by the children. The wandering mind can continue until a person recognises this issue and brings attention back to the anchor of choice which, for Ergas, is often the breath. The children in my study believed that focus on their breath was an effective stimulus for improving present moment awareness, and this principle resonates with both scientific and Buddhist schools of thought. They found the different breath exercises memorable and easy to refer to as an introduction to focused awareness. Additional options were then introduced, such as bodily sensations and eating mindfully. Other ideas such as listening to the teacher, or a sustained bell sound, were made more explicit through my frequent references in lessons, along with the torchlight metaphor previously mentioned within the last sub theme.

I recorded in my diary that 13 focus group children had enjoyed in depth discussions on thoughts and feelings, however there were more children from the class who also appeared excited and very keen to share their views. This development of emotional literacy during this programme could be perceived as a considerable strength. The first four lessons addressed thoughts, focus and concentration. When wobbles were introduced, during Lesson 5, this referred initially to the wandering mind and confusion with thinking, but also began to lead into feelings that affect our thoughts. This was when my comments began to increase in detail.

I think the children are keen to talk about feelings. From focus group discussions and reactions in class, they seem to identify more with these rather than improving attention. Maybe they see increasing concentration as something that concerns the teacher more than them. (Evaluator Diary 28.11.18 Lesson 5)

Detailed discussion of personal feelings really developed when a boy became upset in Lesson 5 as the children made notes about feelings experienced in their bodies and minds. His grandfather had just died and all the two adults present felt that this was of particular significance. While the boy spoke about his grief to Blue outside the room, the class discussed sadness and how important it was to talk about feelings that were personally upsetting. After this event a number of children began talking to me voluntarily about situations that had made them upset. During Lesson 6 all the children began to open up about positive and negative personal feelings and showed a developing knowledge of how these feelings affected their bodies. Both Blue and Brooklyn made reference to this growing awareness.

More than half the class put their hands up when asked how they were feeling and why. Children could relate to their thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations. They gave detailed explanations of these. (Brooklyn 5.12.18 Lesson 6 observation sheet)

They seem to be developing an understanding of why they feel things and that it is normal to feel a variety of emotions. (Blue 12.12.18 Lesson 7 observation sheet)

Ideas about thoughts also deepened at this point. The class had established by now that thoughts came from the mind and that the mind could travel, from past and present to future. We talked about how we sometimes hear or see thoughts. JB then shared how thoughts can be provoked by music, which led to a discussion of thoughts producing feelings. Some children were also developing some interesting metaphors and sophisticated vocabulary to describe emotions.'

Brittany spoke of relaxation moving down the body and excitement moving up. JD spoke of laughter like a house in an earthquake, falling down into his belly. (Evaluator Diary 23.1.19 Lesson 10)

Brooklyn spoke of the calm focus the class showed when identifying their emotions and bodily feelings on their post it notes.

When we were discussing humour, some children began to recognise that we can experience different emotions when faced with the same scenario.

Heather was scared during the laughter on the train film. She didn't understand. Ashley had a happy feeling watching them all laugh. Black Night was worried in case the driver laughed and crashed the train. It was interesting that the children recognised one another's feelings and accepted different points of view. (Brooklyn 23.1.19 Lesson 10)

Gratitude seemed the most difficult emotion to explain. I decided to model paying compliments and showing gratitude to the adult observers. I then asked the children to give compliments to each other. We had a good discussion about the feelings this activity promoted, and they began to show understanding of connections between feelings of gratitude, actions of kindness and happiness for themselves and others.

Blue recognised that all feelings should be acknowledged, including negative experiences and the feelings associated with them.

I've noticed that when we do talk about feelings some children get upset, but in a good way. They get upset because the discussions remind them of certain things. This gives us the opportunity to talk about how it is ok to feel these things.  
(Blue Final interview 7.2.19)

Blue also saw developing vocabulary when discussing thoughts and feelings, saying 'It's good to give names to thoughts and feelings and examine reasons as to why we feel the way we feel.'

The adults had recorded feelings on their concept maps. Ann adapted her map to include benefits for dealing with anger and worries, along with focusing on happy things and being grateful (Appendix 15 Fig. 4 p. 185). Brooklyn had added a list of benefits for children on her map consisting of awareness of self, emotional awareness, balance of thinking and feeling, thinking logically, emotional regulation, resilience and empathy. She wrote that children could articulate their emotions and regulate. She also added that children were less unsettled when vocalising their awareness of surroundings and experiences (Appendix 15 Fig. 5 p. 186).

These lessons presented many opportunities for self-reflection relating to feelings and the thoughts that underpinned these moods. Most children showed great enthusiasm for these discussions. While there were often mixed emotions regarding the mindfulness exercises there was a unanimous excitement for talking about social and emotional learning. The programme gave the children opportunities to express themselves, often quite eloquently. Ninja spoke of sadness being a dark place. He felt sad when his brother bullied him. He wanted to feel happy but his mind became confused like the glitter in the jar.

The focus group used the word wobbling for a variety of situations, including daydreaming, anger and worry but they were also able to identify the feelings and reasons why. The concept of wobbling was acknowledged in a variety of situations. Luna recognised herself wobbling when she

became annoyed at her grandfather for eating all the trifle. Burger called her anxiety a wobble when her older brother came to visit, explaining, 'I feel anxious because he is moody and can get angry at me.' Eliza described another aspect of wobbling.

Sometimes I can be very happy but get too excited and silly. I run around and don't notice my breathing. I don't think wobbling is always about being sad, angry or scared. It's also when we can't get settled, relax or concentrate.  
(Eliza 5.12.18 Lesson 6)

Some children talked about situations that had made them feel a combination of emotions such as anger and sadness when falling out with friends. There was also a developing pragmatism in responses. For example, Christina explained:

It is normal to feel sad if your friend is being mean to you. It can make you feel angry and hurt too. If you think about mindfulness you might think about it another way. You might see that your friend did not mean to be horrible or they might not be a good friend anyway. You shouldn't get mad and mindfulness helps us calm down. You can't sort out a problem when you are mad. (Christina 23.1.19 Lesson 11)

When talking about grief, in relation to losing a pet or grandparent, the children began to show understanding that feelings were normal, needed acceptance but also recognised the danger of rumination.

Something like a pet dying or someone close to you makes you very sad. It's ok to feel sad but when you want to change those feelings because they are going on too long you can concentrate on happy memories. We can change from sad to happy using mindfulness to concentrate on good things. (Brittany 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

What really surprised me, as teacher and evaluator, was the amount of data that related to the children's worries and fears. There were a number of issues with sleeping. As Luna explained 'When I watch a scary movie my mind can make things up for ages. At night I can be scared of my own shadow.' Ashley, Vergil, Eliza, Brittany and Delilah also expressed fears about ghosts and monsters in the dark. They all spoke of needing to use their imagination differently.

This programme can only introduce basic concepts of mindfulness, as six hours of lessons do not allow for many opportunities to engage in ongoing practise. Ergas' (2019) description of mindfulness emphasised the importance of intention, when present moment awareness is re-established. This grows with ease over lengthening periods of time, through regular mindfulness experiences. The data relating to the children's understanding of thought and feelings would be considered by Ergas

as reflection, not mindfulness, as it shows interpretation, elaboration, making meaning out of experiences and decision making. However, the data relating to thoughts, feelings, choices and awareness of others should not be discounted from this theme. Ergas separated internal mental activities, which he defined as mindfulness, from the cultural, social and historical contexts within which they are practised. My theory views mindfulness as an inner process, but also a gateway for a deeper understanding of thoughts, feelings and choices to be experienced and then expressed to the outer world. As such mindfulness works with social and emotional learning symbiotically to achieve deeper learning of the self and others.

There are a number of papers that address connections for teaching mindfulness with social and emotional learning. Jones (2011) viewed mindfulness as a powerful tool for delivering social and emotional learning objectives, but Lantieri and Zakrzewski (2015) saw social and emotional learning and mindfulness as two separate areas. Their explanation resonates strongly with my data when mindfulness and social and emotional learning are recognised as operating in tandem. According to Lantieri and Zakrzewski, SEL works from the outside in, with a focus on teaching skills, and mindfulness from the inside out, drawing on the premise that individuals have the innate capacity for relationship building qualities such as empathy and kindness.

In relation to thoughts and feelings, the data showed pupils being stimulated by the resources and discussion to become aware of, and then embody, the connection between emotions, thoughts and bodily sensations. This could then encourage the children to better understand how their emotions impact on behaviour, the ability to focus, stress levels and relationships. Social and emotional learning uses the outside-in approach through teaching vocabulary and skills, such as in conflict management. There is an assumption that learning a process is enough to enable an individual to use a particular skill in all relevant real-life situations. At the same time, practising mindfulness does not mean that an individual will automatically develop innate skills to communicate and resolve difficult situations. The ability to make informed choices using social-emotional learning together with mindfulness, particularly in times of highly charged emotions, will be explored in the next subsection. So far, a number of participant evaluations show that the Paws b programme incorporates mindfulness and social and emotional learning opportunities for increasing self-awareness.

### ***Awareness of Choices***

Choice was a concept that I found challenging to teach during the pilot study. This time I felt much more confident.



Making choices seemed to link well with the concept of thinking and not making habitual decisions. I felt that, as this was my second time teaching the programme, I explained this principle more clearly. (Evaluator Diary 7.11.18 Lesson 2)

The Goldilocks story was an effective way of explaining about making appropriate choices and the children enjoyed talking about all the choices Goldilocks had made. During this lesson a child had spoken about how he had chosen to come to school. This started an interesting discussion about how in some situations we do not have a choice. There is however a choice about how these situations can be perceived and, through this change, feelings can shift and transform.

The idea of looking at situations differently to change feelings was expanded further when discussing how to deal with unpleasant feelings. The final lesson about choosing happiness created good opportunities to revise this. We also discussed sadness when JB became upset because his pet dog had died. Ann noticed how supportive and empathetic the children around him were. While we talked about a future time when JB could choose to think about happy memories of his pet I wanted to make clear that his grief was natural and negative feelings are part of life.

Brooklyn and Ann recognised how some children became aware of making choices throughout the lessons. Opportunities were used to emphasise choosing to pay attention.

Jo was very open about paying more attention to TB than the lesson. He is very honest and seems to say what he thinks. This created a good opportunity to talk about choosing what to pay attention to. (Brooklyn 14.11.18 Lesson 3)

The children were reminded that if they did not want to listen, they should not take other people's choices away by being disruptive. (Ann 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

The idea of respecting other people's choices will be explored further under the subtheme of awareness of others.

All three observers spoke of the concept of choice in their interviews. Brooklyn had noted that even if someone had been disruptive the children had learnt to change their focus by using the torchlight of attention. Ann saw strong evidence for the children understanding that they had choices, saying 'Choice has become very evident when I've been observing the lessons.' Blue also mentioned choice but was slightly more reticent about the children's knowledge. She stated, 'I think the children understand that they can choose to react to situations in different ways. It's helpful for their thinking.'

Within focus group discussion the concept of making conscious choices arose in a number of ways. The children made reference to choice in relation to attention within class and learning. As Luna, after Lesson 3, explained 'School is about choices. You can choose to pay attention. If you make the wrong choices, you're not going to like it or learn.' Brittany described her conscious decision to focus during a lesson.

You were talking but then, all of a sudden, a funny photo came up on the PowerPoint. Most people were looking at the photo and lost their concentration. First, I looked at it but I was able to focus on you when you said to keep concentrating on you. I kept my torchlight of concentration on you. (Brittany 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

There were also instances of some children becoming distracted by others within the classroom. Ninja could often become distracted by Jo's disruptive behaviour. He mentioned, after Lesson 4 and 7, of his ability to choose not to pay attention. He recalled 'Jo was distracting me. I stopped paying attention and moved my attention to you.' By Lesson 7 he felt he was becoming better at focusing on the lessons. Delilah was able to talk through her change in focus during the session after Lesson 3 when Jo was walking around the classroom in an unsettled manner. She commented 'I've only just started using breathing for attention. Joseph is walking around the tables messing about. I'm going to choose to concentrate on talking to you.' Delilah also spoke about being distracted by some boys in a Maths lesson. She said she started to panic like the glitter jar. Delilah concluded 'I know that I can move my attention away from them like the torchlight now.'

Some children talked about making deliberate choices for thoughts, emotions and reactions. After Lesson 2, Christina talked of controlling emotions through making good choices when angry curbing the urge to hit someone. She added after Lesson 7, 'If you didn't want to lose your temper but couldn't control it you could think of happy thoughts like Christmas.'

In terms of reactive behaviour Brittany, after Lesson 10, talked about not wanting to do household chores at her mother's request. Through finger breathing in her room, she decided it was best to complete these tasks.

Breathing techniques and the personal invisible bubble were mentioned as helping focus the children to make informed choices. Brittany also made reference to space for reflection when she remarked after Lesson 9 'Something might not be right the first time you think about it. You've got to take a few moments to make a good decision.'

There were a number of opportunities in this programme to investigate making informed choices, beginning with choosing a focus for attention. This is a mindfulness principle identified by Ergas (2019). Jones (2011) referred to this concept as sustained attention developed through mindfulness activities that provide training in how to direct attention at will. The data showed children developing the ability to choose to pay attention in class and not become distracted by others. Jones also described cognitive control, which creates distance between thoughts that arise and our cognitive reactions to them. This can happen within a mindfulness sitting practice or through the development of dispositional mindfulness (Tomasulo, 2020; Rau and Williams, 2016). The space between an action and a thought occurring from such action allows for greater opportunities to make informed choices. This can be seen within the data when the children referred to looking at situations with alternative perspectives, such as the story about a child on the playground who believed her friends were laughing at her.

Awareness of emotions and considered responses to events are other attributes that Jones (2011) referred to when discussing the beneficial effects of mindfulness. Many intrusive thoughts can be negative in nature and it can be easy to ruminate on these. There is also the fight, flight or freeze reaction stimulated by an immediate response to perceived fear. Mindfulness encourages a more decentred perspective on these feelings, allowing for reasoned choices to occur. These situations, mostly relating to anger and worry, were discussed by the children at length and noted by the adult observers.

The mindfulness principle of acceptance, relating to the non-judgemental, detached perspective on our thoughts and feelings, is a quality that can warrant some confusion in relation to choices. Letting go of those judgments can help you see things as they actually are. Making choices through reflection, after a period of non-judgemental mindfulness, allows for a more reasoned response through exploring alternative perspectives. This aspect of reasoning and reflection can be seen within children's discussions outside of mindfulness practices. Forbes (2019) and Magee (2016) described a variety of ways in which mindfulness can engage with minds which may, through informed choice, wish to challenge prejudice, bias and privilege.

The data from my study was unable to give examples of changing attitudes to socio-cultural norms brought about by mindfulness practice. However, if the principles of critical contemplative pedagogy (Kaufman, 2017) are considered, the data so far resonates with embracing impermanence

and fostering intentionality. The sub themes that follow could now be seen to illustrate foundations that promote feelings of interdependence through growing awareness of other people in a collective group.

### ***Awareness of Others***

Awareness of others was developed through discussions relating to how the children thought the people and animals were feeling in the resources. The pictures of puppies and kittens stimulated descriptive responses relating to facial features and body language. In the diary I recorded that the children seemed particularly interested in the video of the gymnast wobbling and falling off the beam, especially since a number of girls attend gymnastics club and related to her plight. Blue commented on the children's observations of the gymnast probably feeling nervous and angry but appearing brave as she kept getting back on the beam. Brooklyn saw the children's reactions as showing empathy.

Another useful resource was the story about a child on the playground who believed her friends were laughing at her. The class really seemed to relate to this scenario. A lot of children talked about how the child might be feeling and explored how the situation might not be what it first appeared to be. The *Don't Worry Be Happy* music video and the man laughing on the train were other resources that made children think about opposing views as some of the children enjoyed them while others were unsure. I noted 'The children seem comfortable with knowing that we can have different opinions that are neither right nor wrong.'

While children were growing in self-awareness, they also seemed to notice others more. Ann, during her final interview, talked about the need for keeping calm and observing as necessary for making informed choices when interpreting the feelings of others. Her map also included the benefits of interpreting facial expressions and body language (Appendix 15 Fig. 4 p. 185). Brooklyn spoke of children starting to look at situations from different perspectives. She believed that many adults found that challenging. Brooklyn noted that the children were showing the ability to move away from a situation and initial reactions, to consider other ways of seeing things and make the best choices for all involved. She saw a development in logic and empathy, recognising the logic for working in group towards the benefit of all. This can decrease personal anxiety and improve chances of success. To work well with a group, you need firm connections built on understanding and empathising with others. This is where awareness of others moves into making connections with the group through informed actions.

I always thought that logic and empathy were two separate areas but they do fit together. I can see children being more emotionally resilient and mature because of this. (Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)

Children's comments also showed the effectiveness of the resources in encouraging them to think about how other people might be feeling. Lesson 7 videos showing reactions to fight, flight and freeze, along with the story of Chris being laughed at on the playground, had stimulated rich discussion about reactions and reasons for responses. Luna felt very sorry for Chris because she believed the children were laughing at her. The little girl who froze while singing on Britain's Got Talent provoked a detailed discussion about stage fright, something a few children had experienced. There was also developing empathy for her plight. Delilah said she felt sad at first but was really happy when the girl managed to finish her song.

There were empathetic responses from the laughter on the train video. Brittany felt sorry for the passengers at first because they looked so sad. Ashley also commented:

I was kind of confused because it was controlling my feelings. When they looked sad, I felt sorry for them and it made me feel sad. I felt sorry for them because they were in a dark and dull place. When the man made them laugh, they were happy and I felt happy too. (Ashley 23.1.19 Lesson 10)

The children seemed to become more aware of the other children both in the focus group and within class. Christina commented that Power, a girl within the focus group, could often struggle and get upset because she found it difficult to understand English. She now saw her as calmer and happier. The children also noted that some boys who had displayed disruptive behaviour at the beginning of the programme had changed through the lessons.

I've noticed BB who's really good at mindfulness and before he was being a bit silly. He didn't listen or join in but now he's got really good answers. Other boys like Jo and TB also used to be a bit silly but because of mindfulness they are smarter and taking part in everything. (Christina 23.1.19 Lesson 10)

Luna agreed that BB and JB were acting differently. She saw them being more approachable and friendly. Ashley also commented:

BB can talk to other children in lessons but today he was actually listening. It's good because he can learn about mindfulness and when he grows up he'll know what to do when someone hurts him or when he wants to hurt someone. (Ashley 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

The focus group remarked on other children within the school who they recognised as having significant emotional and behavioural issues.

Children who get really angry like IB and JB could understand why they feel like that and how they can stop losing control. I think this lesson would be really useful for children like them. (Christina 12.12.18 Lesson 7)

The head teacher, through her own interactions with the children, recognised how the children were linking awareness of themselves to the awareness of others. She said that they were more open to talking about how they felt. They were also more in tune with other children around them and developing strategies for helping others. This will be explored further when the second question addresses connections with others.

The thinking and reflecting have heightened an awareness of themselves and awareness of others. It's great for their learning but also great for their relationships both at school and at home. (Head teacher interview 2.5.19)

Through inner reflection, brought about by mindfulness, the children were identifying their own thoughts and feelings, and verbalising these experiences using the vocabulary and metaphors stimulated by the programme. The data suggests that this had started to be translated to others around them. This development could be partly due to enhanced capacity for acting with present-centred awareness rather than focusing on past or future events. Greater attention to others may allow an individual to read body language and facial expressions, while socio-emotional learning could develop knowledge of interpreting and verbalising such cues.

Beitel et al. (2005) highlighted the importance of empathy and perspective taking. Development of perspective taking can be seen, within the data, through discussions relating to how the children and people were feeling in the visual resources and skills in interpreting body language and facial expressions. Empathetic concern was displayed when the children were talking about the later lessons, feeling sorry for the girl who froze on stage and even going as far as feeling happy when the people on the train were laughing. This knowledge was also extended to other children in the class, especially in relation to changing attitudes and behaviours.

Once again mindfulness and social-emotional learning can be seen working in synergy to develop knowledge and skills. The role of mindfulness in facilitating perspective-taking and empathetic concern, explored by Block Lerner et al. (2007), could be applied to an educational context. Cotton

(2013) supplied a comprehensive review of research findings that support the provision of empathy training to enhance empathetic feelings and increase pro-social behaviour within social-emotional learning. Although mindfulness was not mentioned within this source, some tasks listed here resonated with the Paws b activities. The programme exposed the children to emotionally arousing stimuli. Through these resources, and the discussions that followed, children were able to focus on personal feelings as a point of departure for relating to the feelings of others. A shared vocabulary and metaphorical imagery allowed children to share similarities between their own feelings and others, together with information on different functions of four parts of the brain. Sustained practice in imagining and perceiving other people's perspectives, along with open and honest discussion, showed variety in interpreting personal realities. Empathy will be discussed again when looking at relationships between individuals and others on page 108.

## **Summary**

Most children, both in lessons and focus group discussions, displayed increasing engagement and enjoyment for the programme. Resources and activities were stimulating and, although some objectives were considered challenging, there was a reason to think a deep level of understanding was achieved, alongside positive changes in attitude and behaviours. Challenges identified included the classroom environment, time taken to address misunderstandings, the recollection of painful memories and feelings of boredom, but were seen to offer opportunities for reflection on strategies and solutions. The fusion of mindfulness and social-emotional learning connects inner and outer experiences, advocated by Myers (2004) as supporting all levels of consciousness and optimising learning. The data shows possible development for social justice principles and moral application through acknowledgement of informed, personal choices and increasing awareness of others.

## **Chapter 6 Findings and Analysis of Themes 3 and 4**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapter explored data to address the core evaluation question 'To what extent can the programme be deemed as successful taking into account the views of participants?' Programme content was addressed using data from Theme 1 to illustrate levels of engagement, perceived learning and challenges recognised by participants. Theme 2 established how successful the programme was in presenting core aspects of mindfulness identified through the literature review. Sub-themes covered awareness of breath for cognizance of the present moment, thoughts and feelings, recognition of personal choices and consciousness of others. This chapter focuses on the other evaluation questions, regarding social justice principles and proposed, programme developments.

### **Theme 3 Connection**

The data that follows will address the next evaluation question, 'To what extent have children engaged with social justice principles through the programme?' This explores how children developed awareness of increased personal power and responded to their roles within the classroom with more autonomy. Connection was introduced through increased awareness of others and personal responsibilities of informed choice within the previous theme. Data from Theme 3 continues this investigation starting with connection between facilitator, children and the transference of control. Control is not passed over indefinitely but rather part of subtle negotiation, as power remains fluid and ever changing through discourse (Foucault, 1998). This is important in terms of social justice. Pedagogical theories will be revisited, along with literature investigating the benefits of facilitator awareness and actively modelling mindfulness.

There is then an investigation of data that illustrates the movement from awareness of others to prosocial action. Magee (2016) addressed how mindfulness may inherently raise awareness of interconnectedness for some, for others such awareness needs specific cultivation. In terms of children who are in the constant process of developing emotional and social knowledge, it cannot be assumed that this process will occur without an adult facilitator to explain, guide and encourage. As such this section naturally follows the analysis of my connection with the children. Theories from the Buddhist/spiritual perspectives and social justice will be drawn upon here.



This theme concludes with an investigation of how children translated their new skills and knowledge to contexts outside the classroom. For this literature on effective pedagogies and use of real-world contexts will be revisited, as children began to recognise their personal agency to promote social responsibility within their own lives outside of the classroom. Philosophies of education will be applied (Kelly, 2019; Dewey, 1938), plus discussion of the impact adults in education have when their own internal beliefs become conscious (Fullan, 2015).

### ***Teacher/Facilitator Relationship with Children***

These lessons were seen, right from the beginning, as being different to other lessons. During a number of discussions Ann commented on how calm I appeared, without needing to exert authority to keep control. I began to read the initial class mood quickly and respond with increasingly familiar strategies. I also found that greeting the class at the door and smiling helped the lesson start on a more positive note. Emphasis on maintaining children's attention and participation was brought through by request rather than instruction.

I found it interesting the way you dealt with TB. He seemed quieter after you had talked to him about taking away other children's choices to participate. Other children also seemed very interested in what you were saying.  
(Brooklyn 7.11.18 Lesson 2)

I was very aware of not trying to assert my authority this lesson. I worked towards guiding the boys to take part in the lesson or to sit quietly and respectfully if they chose not to join in. (Evaluator Diary 14.11.18 Lesson 3)

I noticed, at times, how adult observers were focused more on behaviour they deemed inappropriate and disruptive. I made a note after Lesson 2 that Blue was trying to interject and control the children's behaviour on a number of occasions. I decided not to mention this to her or explain my position in terms of classroom management as a mindfulness facilitator. However, these instances diminished over the weeks.

All three adult observers commented on my role and delivery of the programme during their final interviews. Blue found the lessons much more relaxed than others as she felt the children were not being controlled. She recognised that there was disruption at first, but the emphasis on personal choice, while respecting the choice of others, encouraged more positive behaviour. Ann also noticed this different type of classroom management.

I don't want to say that they were allowed to do more because the lessons were always well-managed and under control but techniques like the torchlight gave them an opportunity to look at their own behaviour and refocus themselves. You saw them being distracted and were able to bring them back without telling them what to do. (Ann Final interview 6. 2.19)

Ann commented on my behaviour in the lessons.

You delivered the sessions with so much enthusiasm and made it fun. The children were relaxed and caught up with your enthusiasm, which was lovely to see. There was lots of praise and encouragement. You got so much back from them. (Ann Final interview 6.2.19)

Ann included in her map (Appendix 15 Fig. 4 p. 185) the benefits of thinking more deeply about the children and noticed the children enjoying this different approach. She believed that the programme gave them time to be themselves and offer them opportunities for personal reflection. She stated 'Children of all abilities were on a level playing field.'

Brooklyn saw the children being interested from the beginning, but needing time to become used to this new approach. She felt they were almost waiting to be told the right answer.

Thinking about their own reflections confused them at first, but once they understood what was going on, they were able to enjoy using mindfulness in their own situations. (Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)

Pupil group data illustrated conversations when I had prompted children to remember the torchlight or consider others when they were becoming disruptive during group discussions. There were also comments regarding individuals not wanting to participate, for example my comments to Black Knight during focus group discussion.

I noticed you were writing a story during this lesson. Do you know what was really interesting, you were quiet weren't you? You weren't disturbing others but I wonder why you didn't want to join in. (Evaluator 28.11.18 Lesson 5)

After Lesson 6, Jo and Ninja became increasingly disruptive during group discussion. I needed to intervene, but used questioning rather than command.

While you're being noisy you are taking away other people's choices to join in. Is that fair? Jo, could you do breathing to see whether that settles you down? Well done, you've done a good job there. (Evaluator 5.12.18 Lesson 6)

Eliza referred to this change in my classroom management when she mentioned my careful handling of Sponge Bob after Lesson 10.

You are very calm. When Sponge Bob gets on your nerves you use a calming voice which helps her and you. If you shouted she would be very sad and upset but if you use a nice voice it helps her do what you want her to do, because she has to think about the other children. (Eliza 23.1.19 Lesson 10)

This data is particularly significant as it illustrates an example of a child attempting to assert greater control in conflict to social justice principles, and some notable changes in response to our interactions. Sponge Bob's behavior can exhibit elements of attachment disorder due to her adverse early childhood experiences and subsequent adoption. Her need for exclusive attention from adults resulted in disruptive, anti-social behaviour during the lessons and within focus group discussions. The other children were disturbed and sometimes attacked when Sponge Bob perceived them as receiving greater attention than herself. After I drew Sponge Bob's awareness to the concept of fairness and importance of consideration for others, she modified her behaviour. Eliza interpreted this change to Sponge Bob's increased understanding of how her previous behaviour had negatively affected others. It must be noted that Sponge Bob did not verbalise her own rationale. The issues in understanding other people's perspectives and motivations will be explored further within the concluding chapter. Some data may illustrate more about the observer than the observed, although this does not reduce its relevance.

The children commented on differences in lessons. Ninja, after Lesson 2, said that he was feeling more confident. He remarked 'I'm not scared about being wrong because you can't be wrong.' Luna agreed with this, after Lesson 10, when she commented that she enjoyed answering questions. She said 'I like the fact that I am not right or wrong.' Luna also enjoyed the fact that the children were asked for their opinions within the lessons as well as in focus group discussion.

All participants recognised that my position was different during these lessons. Through teaching the programme and conducting evaluations, I began to recognize the importance of my first-hand experiences and this led me to further reading. Literature relating to mindfulness in schools (Albrecht; 2016; Jones, 2011; Brown, 2011) emphasised the need for a teacher to have established personal mindfulness practice. Development of dispositional mindfulness (Tomasulo, 2020; Rau and Williams, 2016) could explain changes in my behaviour during these lessons and within focus group discussions. I felt that a short, personal mindfulness practice before each lesson really helped me maintain a relaxed, positive attitude. Other literature highlighted the need for teachers to model positive behaviours, without the mention of mindfulness (Dix, 2017; Schonert-Reicht, 2017; Cotton,

2013). Dix idea of stock phrases during moments of conflict reminded me of my own reoccurring question about fairness towards others. The idea of using torchlight for gaining attention and a bell to encourage silence were also routines that I am sure he would approve of. Nonetheless, I strongly felt that my personal practice allowed me to navigate the balance between offering power to the children, without relinquishing my own. This additional literature and evaluations highlighting the importance of mindfulness facilitator roles and beliefs will be explored further during the discussion.

### ***Relationship between the Individual and Others***

Consideration for others seemed to follow awareness of others. When using a standing mindfulness technique some children disturbed others by standing too close. I spoke about imagining an invisible bubble and making sure they did not enter someone else's bubble. By Lesson 5 there was a noticeable improvement during this practice and most children could stand still with focus.

I am still referring to the bubble. This seems to make children aware of others and not encroach on their space. (Evaluator Diary 28.11.18 Lesson 5)

As the programme progressed adult observers noticed that, even if children were not engaged, they would sit quietly so as not to disturb others. There was a growing awareness of how children's behaviour affected others around them. During Lesson 6 BB talked about how his feelings were affected by those around him and how his feelings affected others. This interconnectedness in feelings was explored when we discussed how the children would feel if they were ignored by someone. The children seemed to recognise the importance of showing kindness and gratitude to others because it would make them happy too. This was displayed through the children giving compliments to each other.

The children understand that you have to be kind to be happy. They also know how they should all smile at each other more. (Blue 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

Ann, during this lesson, overheard two girls talking about ways they were going to spread happiness to others. She was delighted with their ideas.

During my final interviews, all the adults mentioned the impact on class behaviour when children were encouraged to consider other children's right to choose. Blue saw them understanding that it was ok not to enjoy the lesson as long as they did not distract others. Ann felt that it was giving the children responsibility to think about how their own behaviour affected others.

I think that is something that really resonated with me, something that I thought I could use. Just giving the children that time to think about things from another person's perspective would be good. (Ann final interview 6.2.19)

During focus group discussion, the children made comments on how they perceived some behaviour changing through greater consideration for others. Vergil said he had stopped playing with his pen in class after Lesson 4 stating, 'It helps me concentrate but it might take away other people's choices to concentrate.' Eliza noticed Burger was no longer playing with a rubber after Lesson 7. Burger explained, 'Yes I stopped playing with it because I thought that it was not fair on the others.' Delilah, after Lesson 10, also recognised the impact of disruptive behaviour on others when she said, 'If you're silly you take away other people's choices to join in if they can't keep their torchlight or attention on the lesson.'

Children commented on the fight, flight and freeze videos, relating actions to how others would feel. Magic said that the boy losing his temper in the supermarket must have really embarrassed his father.

It made me think about not embarrassing my dad like that. I would want to calm down and make the right choices. (Magic 12.12.19 Lesson 7)

The children also recalled events in which their actions had helped others. Magic spoke about when her mother hurt her toe after falling down the stairs. She told her mum to concentrate on breathing and felt that this had helped her relax. Eliza told the group about when she was in town and came across a homeless man.

I felt very sorry for him. He smiled at me and I smiled back. I felt that he felt better because I had smiled at him. I might have cheered him up in a little way. I could make more people happy if I smiled at them. (Eliza 23.1.19 Lesson 10)

Ashley spoke of her increased feeling of connection to the environment.

I was feeling bored at home so I concentrated on my breathing and asked myself what I should do. This helped me think of an idea. I thought about sea animals. I noticed that I wanted to help them by using less plastic. I told my mum we should not buy as much food wrapped in plastic. I keep reminding her in the shops and look for better things to buy. I hope this might help some sea animals. (Ashley 12.12.18 Lesson 7)

Ergas (2019) gave a useful exploration of educational orientations that included the individual and socialization. This data may show aspects of socialization through the recognition that personal actions affect others. Personal awareness data, investigated during the first evaluation question, could be seen to highlight the theme of individualism, however this data moves from the recognition of the individual to being part of a group. The balance between the individual and socialization illustrates significance in terms of social justice (Griffiths, 1998). Positive psychology concepts explored by Van Doesum et al. (2013) can also be drawn upon when the needs of others are anticipated and acted upon. Personal satisfaction and positive self-identity are promoted when individuals strive to help others, increasing happiness through the development of eudaimonic wellbeing (Seligman, 2002). Connection within self and to others is also explored through a spiritual perspective (De Souza 2006), while Buddhism (SGI, 2017) views everything in the world as being interconnected. If connection is felt and acknowledged then kindness, compassion and empathy are encouraged. Cotton (2013) lists tasks that support pro social behaviour without mindfulness strategies. The role mindfulness plays in supporting such outcomes will be discussed further on page 130.

### ***Outside Experiences***

During the pilot study children had not offered much evidence for incorporating mindfulness into life outside of lessons. This time I began asking children about how they were using mindfulness through the week. I also supplied a reference sheet to encourage practising mindfulness over the Christmas holidays. The class did speak of a variety of situations, both within and outside of school, where mindfulness was utilised. Both Ann and Blue commented on these stories. I recorded examples of calming strategies used in stressful family situations during the Christmas break.

I started the lesson with a discussion about techniques we had covered and whether the children had used them over the holidays. The situations they described varied from anger to boredom. Burger then showed me a picture she had drawn at home the week before. She told me how she had focused on her breathing to improve concentration. She believed it was one of the best pictures she had ever drawn.  
(Evaluator Diary 9.1.19 Lesson 8)

Children began to voluntarily share anecdotes on mindfulness. Techniques were mostly referred to as breathing, for example breathing had given Christina the confidence to make a big jump in a play centre. JB, the boy diagnosed with autism, would often talk to me about mindfulness. He enjoyed collecting model trains and spoke about his dissatisfaction regarding the number of trains he did not have. We talked about changing focus to enjoy the trains he already had. This became a useful

situation to refer to when he wanted to change his feelings. It was also something he had spoken to his mother about. She came into school to tell me about the positive changes she had seen in JB at home.

During the first four weeks Blue had not heard children talking about mindfulness or making any reference to it in other lessons. However, by Lesson 6, the class teacher and JB's support worker told me about children talking about their enjoyment of the lessons and making increasing references to breathing, focus, concentration and choices during the day.

After her initial interview Blue had added, 'ways to cope with everyday life' on her concept map (Appendix 15 Fig. 1 p. 184). During the final interviews both Blue and Ann noted that children were now using mindfulness in their everyday lives. Blue said, 'The children do say that when they get home they take time to calm down and reflect.' Ann spoke of stories from the children regarding the classroom, yard and home, 'It's saying amazing to see. Mindfulness has extended beyond the sessions and stayed with them.' Ann added specific benefits on her concept map (Appendix 15 Fig. 4 p. 185) to include playground strategies and helping focus during other lessons.

Both Blue and I noticed issues with certain children recounting events from before the beginning of the programme. Blue stated in her final interview that this was not necessarily negative, as the children were now making connections to experiences that would have benefitted from particular mindfulness strategies. This will be investigated further when children's perspectives are explored.

Another interesting feature was that the adults were beginning to relate lessons to their own experiences. Blue, in her initial interview, expressed benefits from practising mindfulness herself. Brooklyn admitted personal reticence but after the programme spoke of becoming increasingly aware of using mindfulness to cope with her own emotions and situations. Brooklyn was surprised that she had enjoyed the sessions and believed that they had helped her put many of her worries into perspective. Her concept map (Appendix 15 Fig. 5 p. 186) noted inadvertently adopting methods, despite her initial dislike. Ann also spoke of her own changing viewpoints, specifically within school.

Mindfulness gives me more awareness of thinking about how my reactions affect situations. I'm also thinking more deeply about how I see the children. I am seeing things from a different point of view and this helps my own work in school.  
(Ann First interview 7.1.19)

The focus group made many references to situations, both within and outside school, where they had applied mindfulness. This first came initially through my questioning, but after a number of weeks the children were initiating discussion about experiences. The children spoke primarily about English and Maths lessons, when work was difficult to understand. Black Knight, Vergil, Heather and Brittany talked about confusion when learning. All four children mentioned taking a deep breath and things becoming clearer. Luna and Jo also spoke about fear of not finishing a task within the given time. As Luna explained:

I was running out of time to finish my work. I needed to write my story quickly and started to panic. I took a deep breath and my ideas became clearer. It was like the glitter jar swirling around then settling. (Luna 16.1.19 Lesson 9)

There were seven references to using mindfulness while completing homework. Children spoke of focusing on the breath when they felt confusion, frustration and distractions. Their stories also gave descriptions of their feelings, for example:

I used breathing when I had to do my maths homework. My mum didn't help me so I had to do it alone. I felt really nervous. I was scared in case I got a question wrong. I concentrated on my breathing and felt better. (Brittany 14.11.18 Lesson 3)

Children spoke of strategies to deal with anger, specifically in relation to annoying brothers.

When my biggest brother was annoying me, I decided to go to the bathroom because it has a lock. I took some deep breaths and felt better. It also helped because I was in my bubble. (Ashley 21.11.18 Lesson 4)

By Lesson 5 children started referring to techniques such as Finger Breathing, Petal Practice and Chest Stomach breathing. Other anecdotes involved issues with parents. Ashley spoke of annoyance when she felt her mother was ignoring her. Eliza talked about her mother's anger after she had made a healthy drink that Eliza refused. Magic spoke of her anxiety when her parents argued. She said 'I go into my room and take some deep breaths. I try not to worry about it because it's adult talk.'

As has been referred to before, there were examples of children using mindfulness when scared. Delilah was particularly scared at night and this had led to problems sleeping.



I am scared of the dark. Sometimes I can see monsters and think my nightmares are real. I started taking deep breaths and doing belly breathing really slowly. My monster was my imagination and if I make my mind show me different things my monster goes away. (Delilah 9.1.19 Lesson 8)

As both Blue and I had noted, there were some situations that children spoke of, relating to events before the lessons started.

When I was four years old I saw a big dog. It pushed me into the nettles. I used mindfulness to calm myself down and make things better. (Magic 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

After Vergil's first lesson he spoke about breathing in his room to help with the frustration of not being able to attend school while recovering from an operation. Although he could not have been using knowledge acquired from the lesson, he may have already developed this strategy for calming himself down.

These examples could display the potential issue of children's comments offered for teacher approval. This may, however, display developing understanding of how newly learnt mindfulness techniques could have benefitted them during prior experiences, thus supporting Blue's comments made during her final interview.

Literature on successful pedagogy (Pearce, 2016; James and Pollard, 2011; CURRE, 2009) emphasised the importance of linking learning to real-world problems and applications. My data shows that children were utilizing mindfulness techniques for the benefit of themselves and others. While I initially emphasised wider applications to the class, children soon began showing excitement and engagement through voluntarily sharing their stories with me and other adults within school. There are significant connections made here to the educational theories of Dewey (1938) which highlighted social enterprise, when individuals are encouraged to contribute and feel responsible for life outside the classroom. Some children appeared to be developing personal agency and altruism, promoting social responsibility in their own lives and for others around them. Kelly (2019) explored the many purposes of education and importance of recognising that each teacher has personal opinions of these. Adults in education need to explore their own internal realities (Fullan, 2015) to reflect on own meanings for the work that they do.

Kelly's (2019) list for educational purposes included knowledge to get by, knowledge of subject matter, learning how to learn, lifelong work habits, self-esteem and confidence. The idea of creating

thoughtful citizens recognises that students will someday be part of a community and need skills for this. My own reflection on purposes for educating children and the role I play has allowed me to offer social justice principles. Unlike a transmission model of teaching, I was encouraging problem-based learning (Freire, 1970) as pupils were encouraged to think and actively solve problems. This model views the student as a person with prior knowledge that may be capitalized upon to reach greater results than a banking model that fails to take advantage of this capital. The difference was that many of these problems were not presented to children by the teacher. Children were sharing their own problems and beginning to investigate their own solutions.

## **Summary**

My facilitator role was recognised by all participants as being different from my traditional teaching style. All the children responded well to a more relaxed, informal style. Adult observations and children's responses showed that I was offering pupils greater autonomy within the lessons, and I felt that they were learning to pass control back to me in order to make the lessons work. Increased personal agency was translated to situations within and outside of school. Both adults and children made comments on how they perceived some behaviour changing through greater consideration for others. This was encouraged through my questions on whether actions were fair for others and how mindfulness was being used outside of the programme. Children's voluntary recounts then began to show use of mindfulness, during the school day and outside of school, for their own sense of wellbeing and benefit of others. Adults also recognised personal benefits from using mindfulness. Links to social justice principles will be discussed within the next chapter, along with a holistic look at data from other themes to address the second question.

## **Theme 4- Programme Development**

The following section examines data relating to the final evaluation question 'What suggestions are proposed for programme development and change?' This is particularly pertinent to the school, relates to other schools wishing to embark on the implementation of mindfulness teaching, and may be of use to the Paws b curriculum developers (MiSP). Adaptability addresses whether lesson content could be suitable for younger, older children or even adults although the programme's age range covers 7-11. When mindfulness is introduced to children, and in what form, was another query raised, leading to further literature searches involving mindfulness techniques and programmes for younger children (Piotrowski et al., 2017; Flook and Pinger, 2017).

The next sub theme investigates observable differences within the class relating to positive behaviour and general atmosphere. While this topic overlaps previous sub themes, data could be particularly useful in supplying perceptible evidence for school support, even if staff members do not fully understand all mindfulness benefits. Dix (2017) did offer positive behaviour strategies, without mindfulness, which focused on changing teacher perceptions. There is the need to consider how far behaviour changes relate to other factors, such as new class management techniques, in combination with mindfulness practice.

This theme concludes with participant suggestions for dealing with perceived issues, including training expenses, staff resistance and time pressures. How to address staff apathy and encourage advocacy (Fullan, 2015) will be explored here. Bristow (2017) offered ideological advice for implementing a successful school mindfulness programme. Again, I wonder how far he consulted schools before writing the article. Illustrating real life examples would certainly have strengthened his position. Finally, suggestions for changes and additions to content are explored, which include art, movement and children's own practices. Offering adult courses to encourage and involve parents was another suggestion brought up by the children and the head teacher.

### ***Adaptability***

After Lesson 7, Blue spoke of potential benefits for older children, believing that some information was too challenging for some Year 3 pupils. Certain concepts were complex and used sophisticated language so I did recognise Blue's views at this point. Ann, however, spoke of the possibility of older children feeling too self-conscious. She saw smaller groups potentially working more effectively under these circumstances. When teaching younger children, I found simple exercises, such as listening to the chime and putting hands up when the sound stopped, effective techniques for Nursery pupils upwards to pay attention and recognise different experiences depending on how close the bell was.

It's amazing how quickly children respond to this request for silence and attention.  
(Evaluator Diary 12.12.18 Lesson 7)

This class had been introduced to some basic breathing techniques when I had taught them in Year 1. I had not referred to their previous experiences but Heather, after Lesson 6, recalled using Petal Practice before.

I feel like we have done Petal Practice before in Year 1. Yes, I remember it now. I used to use it when I came out of school to help me calm down and it worked. I haven't used it in a while but I remember it now. (Heather 5.12.18 Lesson 6)

Within her final interview, Blue spoke of the importance of introducing mindfulness earlier in school. She believed many techniques could be taught to younger children, but some programme resources would not be appropriate. Brooklyn also saw benefits in teaching mindfulness to younger children and had noted this in her concept map (Appendix 15 Fig. 5 p. 186). Brooklyn worked with children a year younger and had already introduced some strategies. Ann, within her final interview, spoke of the need to pitch mindfulness at the right level for younger children. She reiterated her concern that older children might be less open due to peer pressure and self-consciousness if not introduced to mindfulness earlier on.

Blue believed that success would ultimately depend on how accepting individual class members would be. She thought that particular children within school may not react positively to mindfulness lessons, suggesting that specific behavioural needs may warrant small group work. Brooklyn spoke of using softer lighting and cushions for group work, developing an inviting environment for children who might not be readily interested or those feeling shy and anxious.

The head teacher talked about the benefits of mindfulness for adults. She spoke of how beneficial the staff training sessions had been for her own work and wellbeing.

For me reflection is so important to take the space to think things through. It makes you feel more positive about things, you achieve more and this affects your whole wellbeing. (Head teacher interview 2.5.19)

She now enjoyed regular sitting practices to enhance her ability to step aside and reflect. While the head teacher spoke of potential benefits for all staff, she emphasised the need to have a clear understanding of mindfulness. She hoped that we could make it a regular event during staff briefings, but acknowledged possible resistance from certain individuals. We spoke of some lack of enthusiasm noted during the first staff training session. We also agreed that attitudes appeared to be changing. Staff seemed much more settled and comfortable during further sessions. Staff acceptance and understanding would be integral for developing mindfulness throughout the school for the benefits of both children and adults.

The literature on mindfulness for children encourages early introduction to increase opportunity to help cultivate resilience and develop mindfulness practice as they mature (Rogers, 2017). This was supported by participant views, especially as adults believed that some children may exhibit resistance and self-consciousness in later primary years. Children as young as pre-school have been shown to benefit from mindfulness through developing cognitive and social competencies (Flook et al. 2015). The pre-school curriculum investigated by Flook and Pinger (2017) included a wide range of practical activities, such as reading books, crafts, songs and movement, with lessons primarily focused on kindness. Piotrowski et al. (2017) also identified children as young as seven years old preferring more participatory, creative approaches to mindfulness practice. Participants within my study saw Paws b as needing significant adaptation for use with children younger than the recommended age range. The inclusion of more hands-on, creative activities will be discussed later on page 127.

Another issue raised through the data related to children with significant behavioural issues. Paws b is recommended as a whole class programme. While children named certain individuals who they believed would benefit, adults recognised that a small group environment would probably better suit some needs, while reducing disruption for the rest of the class. Marlow and Austin (2016) investigated the effectiveness of informal mindfulness classroom practices for children identified with emotional and behavioural disorders. While they recognised success within the classroom environment, it must be noted that this study was conducted within a summer school specifically designed for such needs. My data highlighted that if the school intended to offer mindfulness to the whole school community, additional programmes, resources and contexts would be needed to cater for all age groups and a variety of needs.

### ***Effects on Social and Emotional Behaviour***

I saw a great impact on learning and social behaviour within the class. By Lesson 3 Brooklyn also acknowledged some activities as useful behaviour management strategies and adaptable to other lessons for increased attention and focus. I recognised practices, such as Paws b and FOFBOC, as effective strategies for settling a restless class. I saw how exercises, like Finger Breathing and Petal Practice, could be encouraged when a child was particularly angry or upset, even if they did not have knowledge of the programme. In terms of packaging these techniques under the umbrella of mindfulness, Blue spoke of certain staff being sceptical, after Lesson 7. She believed that personal bias could negatively affect how some may observe a lesson, even if delivered by trained staff.

The use of mindfulness in developing social and learning behaviours featured in all interviews. Blue had spoken of using FOFBOC to settle some children in class and found concepts, such as torchlight and wobbles, useful to refer to. She also believed the children would benefit from improved self-esteem. This may have personally resonated with Blue as she had experienced difficulties in school. Her dyslexic tendencies had only been diagnosed during adulthood.

They're starting to recognise differences in each other and becoming self-conscious. If we start to teach mindfulness, they'll start to understand that it's ok to be different.  
(Blue Final interview 7.2.19)

Ann saw mindfulness encouraging refocus and sustained concentration, along with calming down strategies for children and adults. She believed that, even if a teacher was not fully committed to mindfulness, using catch phrases and techniques at certain times would be useful.

Some children made a number of comments regarding use of mindfulness for improving behaviour. Eliza, after Lesson 5, believed that teachers would enjoy mindfulness lessons as she saw the class now being 'nice and quiet.' Eliza also saw opportunities for teachers to breathe, relax and calm down if a child was disrespecting them. Rachel, after Lesson 10, commented that the class had seemed calmer than normal in other lessons. She believed that mindfulness lessons helped to promote this change.

Ashley advocated wider benefits of experiencing mindfulness in school.

I think people who don't do mindfulness lessons are unlucky. You get time to share your feelings with a teacher which will help your life to become better. This helps you and other people you know. (Ashley 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

It seemed that both adults and children enjoyed a calmer, more positive classroom atmosphere. It is important to consider what school members from outside a mindfulness programme might recognise as important evidence of benefits. A more settled, happier class may spark an interest in even the most cynical teacher. The Australian programme, Smiling Mind (2018), offered a compulsive argument for mindfulness in schools promoting more focused, engaged learners, as their large-scale study (Lehmann, 2019) reported reductions in classroom disruptions. Of course, the benefits of mindfulness range further than a quiet classroom, but observing increasingly positive behaviour within a class is compelling and useful when encouraging support for a new initiative.

### ***Issues, Changes and Ways Forward***

There were a number of interesting ideas proposed for problems and possible solutions for programme development. Ann had highlighted the potential issue of cost when training other teachers (Appendix 15 Fig. 4 p. 185). As the lessons progressed Ann was particularly impressed with the quality of the resources and the detailed lesson notes. She said that, even though she had not received the training, she would now feel comfortable teaching some of the lessons. After the final interview she added to her concept map the importance of observing someone trained (Appendix 15 Fig. 4 p. 185). We talked about the possibility of in-house training, although I did inform her that the Mindfulness in Schools Project had expressed concern about this. They had emphasised, during the facilitator course, that the integrity of the programme could be jeopardised without official training attendance.

Heather commented on the issue that I was the only teacher who taught mindfulness. She said 'You are going to be very busy if other classes want to learn mindfulness. What will happen to the other lessons that you need to teach?' Ashley, after the final session, also raised issues in finding the time to conduct mindfulness in lessons. Heather added 'If we can squeeze in a mindfulness lesson, we might not have time to complete other lessons. This might make us panic about not getting other work done.'

The children spoke of the need to continue practising mindfulness every day and had some suggestions about how this could be done in school. Ashley wanted longer lessons, adding:

Mindfulness really helps me. Every time you come you have a soothing voice. You put up pictures and it really helps me know what you are talking about. I would like more lessons like these. (Ashley 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

Vergil said he would like different lessons to know more, but would also like to keep talking about situations that he felt would benefit from mindfulness. Brittany wanted to keep the mindfulness after school club going explaining 'I would like our own time for mindfulness because in school we have to do a lot of work.' Ashley thought a mindfulness after-school club would be useful if someone was having a difficult time at school. She said 'You could come here to calm down and do things that would help you.' Christina preferred incorporating mindfulness into the school day, saying 'You can come in to teach us some mindfulness at the beginning of a lesson. That would help us concentrate better.' Eliza added 'It would also keep us calm if someone was being mean to us. It would stop us getting very sad or angry.'

Adults also spoke of lack of time within the curriculum along with possible staff resistance. Ann believed that some staff did not understand the potential benefits and would never have the commitment to try it themselves.

I wonder how you could encourage that engagement. That would be very difficult with some teachers. You have to pay attention to understand what is actually happening and it is also about respecting other people's choices. Hopefully we have enough staff who will be interested. (Ann Final interview 6.2.19)

Brooklyn shared her personal experiences of working with exhausted and demoralised staff. She was concerned that their pessimism could also be applied to mindfulness. On her concept map (Appendix 15 Fig. 5 p. 186) she had included the observation of how perceptions of mindfulness and class responses are directly affected by the current frame of mind of the observer.

The head teacher offered an idea for encouraging enthusiasm amongst the staff. She had come to recognise the power of pupil voice, saying that it should be something that the school should do more naturally. She suggested that children may wish to speak to staff and governors of their experiences.

Hearing it from the children does make it very memorable for staff. It is also good that the children have given you their honest evaluations. The whole programme has created an environment for open discussion. (Head teacher interview 2.5.19)

Moving forward, she spoke of continuing staff sessions and introducing some simple strategies for teachers to trial in their classrooms. This could begin with basic classroom strategies and metaphors I had introduced in the programme, allowing the children to display positive classroom behaviours described in the previous sub theme.

Ann spoke of the need to raise the profile of mindfulness throughout the whole school. On her map (Appendix 15 Fig. 3 p. 185) she had initially included proper training, the right environment and allocation of time, all requiring support from management. Observers had also noted that introduction would take time and constant reinforcement. Blue had added on her map (Appendix 15 Fig. 2 p. 184) the importance of remembering to put mindfulness into day-to-day life and lessons. The head teacher, during her interview, had commented on benefits of children's posters, placed around school, for reminding both pupils and staff of mindfulness strategies to use throughout the day.



I saw the most significant suggested change as being a more hands on, creative approach. Brooklyn had noted early on that the higher ability children enjoyed learning about parts of the brain. At this point in the programme a core group of very articulate children were dominating discussion. She had noticed that some children were quite fidgety and believed that they would benefit more from greater inclusion. A number of these children had joined the mindfulness after school club and all the observers had noticed their enjoyment of the craft activities.

Children this age like tactile things. They like making abstract concepts more practical, more real and more memorable. (Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)

Making glitter jars was particularly useful when describing confusion in the mind. Brooklyn also offered suggestions that included mindful movement, inspired by the children enjoying Petal Practice and Finger Breathing.

The focus would still be on the breath but you could make bigger movements with your whole body. You could also try mindful walking, mindful peer massage or even a scavenger hunt, observing and collecting things from nature.  
(Brooklyn Final interview 20.2.19)

Both Brooklyn and I had noticed how the children were beginning to come up with new breathing exercises. They were using creativity, assimilating their new knowledge and gaining ownership of their own mindfulness strategies.

The children had many ideas for developments. The addition of more craft activities came, primarily, from the enjoyment of the mindfulness club activities, such as making clay pebbles, aromatherapy bags, glitter jars and colouring sheets. The mindful movement exercises were also popular. The children had enjoyed a mixture of yoga with mindfulness on a few occasions. Ashley commented that she enjoyed concentrating on her body more than her breath which she had, at times, found uncomfortable. We also revisited some peer massage activities that I had taught the class in Year 1. All 17 children asked for more of these massages within the club. They said it relaxed them and helped them make better friendships. The enthusiasm for mindfulness itself was hard to distinguish due to the excitement for these enterprises.

Vergil found colouring worksheets very relaxing and beneficial for focus, saying 'It would be good if we did colouring in the lessons, as well as the club.' Eliza enjoyed making the clay pebbles and saw potential uses. She said 'If you are really angry you can hold your pebble and breathe.' Eliza also

spoke of making the glitter jars being used as a memory aide. Luna, after Lesson 10, suggested that we make mindfulness posters for school and home so the children could remember the practices. Rachel liked the idea of changing the breathing practice each week.

We could have a whiteboard in the class and change ideas each week. We could practise different things and think about which ones are best for us.  
(Rachel 30.1.19 Lesson 11)

I had introduced a range of resources and ideas that had not been specified in the programme, such as books<sup>3</sup> and the invisible bubble exercise, which the children had commented on positively. They began to make up their own practices. Vergil, in an effort to calm his mind, had started making lists. He explained 'Things come into my head so I write down the thoughts that stop me from sleeping. I fold the paper so I can't see the words and this really helps.' Ashley made a balancing exercise which involved moving her arms while standing on one leg. She said it helped her focus and calm down. Luna enjoyed counting breaths, FOFBOC and Petal Practice but said she wanted to make up new activities. After Lesson 11, Luna showed me how she moved her fingers to make a square while counting breaths. AG, during that lesson, had also showed me a breathing exercise using all fingers, touching then separating them in sequence.

Both Blue and Ann had brought up the issue of parent views on the concept maps. Issues, they felt, may come from a lack of interest or even go as far as strong resistance. Ann had suggested the possibility of starting a mindfulness group for parents and carers, to support the whole school community.

The children had made many comments about wanting to give parents the opportunity to learn mindfulness. There was a recognition that parents were stressed and would benefit from calming down strategies. As Brittany explained 'Parents need to learn to calm down because they need to go to work, do shopping and pick us up from school. I would like Mum and Dad to do mindfulness so they could be less stressed.' Eliza agreed that parents become mad and need to calm down sometimes. Christina spoke of her father's anxiety, when going for a job interview, explaining 'It didn't go well and he felt sad and stressed afterwards. I wish he could have use mindfulness to make himself feel better.'

---

<sup>3</sup> *50 Ways to Feel Happy* (King et al. 2018); *Breathe, Chill* (Roberts 2014); *Peaceful Piggy Meditation* (MacLean, 2004); *A Pebble for Your Pocket* (Nhất Hạnh 2001).

The children also spoke of wanting to practise mindfulness with their parents. Eliza thought parents would enjoy mindfulness club because it would be useful to learn fun activities to do when their children became bored. Magic said she enjoyed talking openly about mindfulness and feelings with me, and would like to be able to talk to her parents in the same way. Rachel added:

My mum would like to do mindfulness with me. She has done it before but it would be good if we could come together and talk about how it helps us. We could also encourage one another to do it when we need to. (Rachel 23.1.19 Lesson 10)

The head teacher suggested working with some parents who had either expressed an interest or been identified as needing support. Introducing mindfulness from the beginning of primary was another idea discussed.

The new parents are very keen and eager as the children are starting school and this interest could be captured. We could begin with Early Years and grow mindfulness as children come through the school. (Head teacher interview 2.5.19)

The issue of training more Paws b facilitators has already been identified in a previous sub theme, when exploring the need to introduce benefits of mindfulness to staff. How to timetable activities was another issue that has been raised in a number of publications. Paws b requires up to 12 hours for lessons but participants recognised the need for ongoing practise. Piotrowski et al. (2017) illustrated the variety of inventive activities used by teachers to incorporate mindfulness within the school day. The participants were, however, highly motivated and experienced in mindfulness. In terms of ongoing practice, the Smiling Mind programme (Bailey et al. 2018) offer a free phone application that can be used by both children and adults, within and outside of school.

Gerszberg (2017) identified a variety of ways mindfulness could be promoted for the whole school community. This included the possibility of integrating mindfulness into an existing social and emotional programme. Another strategy, suggested by Bristow (2017), encouraged adoption at individual teacher level, as opposed to top-down decisions made by leadership. Bristow, however, emphasised the need for senior management support. Piotrowski et al. (2017) had illustrated a teacher's frustrations at not being supported by management or staff collaboration. Increasing staff interest, at all levels, appears to be integral for developing a successful mindfulness programme. Articles highlighted the additional need to encourage parental involvement and support for schools developing mindfulness (Bailey et al.,2018; Gerzberg, 2017). Research also displayed personal

benefits for parents (Bailie et al., 2011), programmes for enhancing parental skills (Coatsworth et al., 2015) and support when parenting children with special needs (Benn et al., 2012).

Both adults and children suggested a more creative, hands-on approach. This is another topic illuminated by participants during the evaluation. Studies that show successes of mindfulness when incorporated with activities such as art (Coholic, 2011), movement (Cruchon, 2009; Nhất Hanh and Vriezen 2008) and children's games (Willard, 2010) will be discussed in the next chapter. While the inclusion of practical activities for younger children has already been explored earlier, Bannirchelvam et al. (2017) illustrated that children aged 9-11 years preferred more interactive exercises rather than passively listening to audio-recordings included in the Triple R programme. This highlights the importance of experiential activities to enhance students' knowledge and engagement.

## **Summary**

My evaluation of the programme showed that, while participants recognised the need to introduce the whole school community to mindfulness, additional age-appropriate resources and tailored activities would be required for younger children and pupils with specific emotional needs. Adults and some children saw noticeable changes in positive class behaviour and attitudes, consciously linking shifts to the introduction of mindfulness. Issues identified related to the need and nature of staff training, how to timetable mindfulness within the school day, resistance from some staff and maintaining a raised profile across school. Suggestions for development included the use of pupil advocates, mindfulness posters, need for patience and inclusion of parents. In terms of additions to lessons, adults and children saw a more creative, hands-on approach to include art, movement, story books and the development of children's own activities to deepen understanding and serve as memory aides.

## **Chapter 7 Discussion**

### **Introduction**

My previous review of the literature covered many concepts explored before the start of the evaluation. Additional topics, illuminated through my study data, were also included. I made further reference to this literature during my analysis in the two preceding chapters. I will now offer a detailed analysis of this material, followed by a portrayal of different elements of 'connection' that became particularly significant for me, as mindfulness facilitator and evaluator. I will conclude with an analysis of issues raised by this investigation. This includes the limitations of case study evaluation, use of pupil voice, the effectiveness of methods for gaining adult perspectives and my insider status, which created complexity in the democratic evaluation process (Kushner, 2017) and within thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2014).

### **Concepts that Arose from the Data**

Theories on the perspectives of mindfulness facilitators became increasingly important as I experienced, first hand, how different this was to teaching other subjects. This evaluation was particularly striking as I had taught this class a number of curriculum subjects two years before, and PSHE during the year of this study. Teaching mindfulness demanded particular qualities and skills. I began to understand why a significant number of authors (p. 106), and the requirements for Paws b training, emphasised the need for teachers to establish their own mindfulness practice before introducing techniques to children. Jones (2011) even went so far as to compare mindfulness instruction to teaching someone to play a piano, seeing both as requiring proficient, practical skills and experience.

I felt that I was developing greater awareness within the classroom. This came through the increased ability to listen more carefully to others, think more clearly when being asked complicated or sensitive questions and deal more calmly with behavioural challenges within the classroom. These attributes were illustrated by Albrecht (2016) in relation to mindfulness and the researcher (see page 48), but also seemed highly significant to me as a practising teacher. I felt able to respond more effectively to individual learners within particular moments of need. This could reflect advantages in utilising dispositional mindfulness (Tomasulo, 2020; Rau and Williams, 2015). Both adults and children in my study had recognised my calm and engaged approach during the lessons. I felt that my own, ongoing mindfulness practice aided my understanding of the programme while

also allowing me to relate to, and connect with, the children's experiences. I was left questioning whether a teacher could deliver mindfulness sessions without experiential understanding or genuine appreciation.

The literature previously mentioned within Chapter 2 (Dix, 2017; Cotton, 2013) highlighted the need for teachers to model positive behaviours without the mention of using mindfulness. Creating a positive classroom climate with confidence, certainty, nurture and kindness may certainly be something that can be achieved without a teacher practising mindfulness. Primary school teachers need to be flexible and adaptive through the numerous subjects that they teach. A skilful educator who has knowledge, experience and respect for contemplative practice, but does not necessarily feel that mindfulness resonates with their life and circumstances, may still be an effective teacher. Albrecht (2016), within her study, had chosen participants who had felt drawn to teaching mindfulness after experiencing the benefits themselves. There is always the possibility that teaching mindfulness may encourage an individual to feel the benefits and take this up as a regular activity. Nevertheless, I can only relate to my own increasing understanding and confidence through experiences described below.

I began to recognise significant differences in how it felt to be a teacher and a mindfulness facilitator during my pilot study. Initial concerns related to keeping control of behaviour and guiding the learning process. It had been highlighted during the Paws b training that teacher roles would need to change and adapt to this programme. Features such as welcoming whatever came forth in a lesson, while acknowledging children's responses with greater importance than our own, had been emphasised throughout. I felt initial discomfort with this new approach and the children seemed unsure of how to react. Certain individuals became very quiet in lessons, while others began to openly challenge my authority.

Once trust and mutual respect had been established and nurtured, both during the pilot and with this class, I saw the children thrive with confidence and enthusiastic curiosity. There was a need to maintain a balance between our autonomies, as I required overall control of the lessons to scaffold the children's learning (Wood et al. 1976). This shift in power between facilitator and class came with open questions, inviting the children to evaluate their own learning and behaviours. I had discovered during the pilot study that success depended on my own mindful awareness during sitting practices and discussions. I also had to take care not to fall into my previous teacher authoritarian persona when behaviour provoked me and disrupted lesson flow.

Some days I felt that shorter sitting practices and more discussion were needed, especially when children became restless and tired. Carefully observing the children participate in a practice helped me adapt my script, offering praise and encouragement for those who displayed unease.

Experience allowed me to move away from lesson notes to become increasingly focused on how the class reacted and what they needed. My own ideas, such as chiming a bell, talking about invisible bubbles and giving the teaching assistants compliments, were initially unplanned, spontaneous decisions made in the moment. These activities have subsequently become part of my toolbox of teacher strategies, now used within other subject lessons.

My own mindfulness practice also helped me recognise my own position on the purpose of education and how I wished to encourage connection and community. Although this was not made explicit within the Paws b programme, my own language and emphasis on particular situations raised awareness and encouraged understanding. Fullan (2015) illustrated the underestimated power of teacher advocacy as small innovations made by individual teachers every day. He set out three components for implementing a new programme which included new curriculum materials, new teaching strategies and the potential alteration of teacher beliefs. I developed new teaching techniques which have been translated to other lessons. In terms of the alteration of beliefs, I think I have always been drawn to fairness and equality, especially through years of PSHE subject leadership and trade union roles. While my beliefs remained unchanged, I became more aware of my own perceptions through evaluator reflexivity. Connections between teacher, personal beliefs and programme evaluations need careful consideration.

This has left me wondering whether an educator could teach mindfulness sessions without experiential understanding and appreciation developed through ongoing practice. From my experience I felt that regular mindfulness sessions had allowed me to develop the awareness to connect and respond more effectively to the needs of the class. Brown (2011) recognised the importance of mindful presence and effective instruction to allow contemplative pedagogy to flourish. This was particularly important as some ownership and autonomy needed to move from teacher to children and back again, when support was required. The balance of mindfulness practice and social-emotional learning (Lantieri and Zakrzewski, 2015) requires the teacher to exhibit skill, patience and clear thinking. Keeping calm under stress was something I had to continually draw upon, especially when teaching challenging individuals, such as Sponge Bob. However, I consider the view that teachers cannot deliver this programme without personal commitment to mindfulness as

arguably overgeneralised and unfair. Teaching with knowledge and an open mind could enable some individuals to deliver these lessons with authenticity. Other SEL programmes and activities may foster such qualities, if teachers can develop awareness and connection with their pupils.

Adult participants agreed with me that mindfulness should be introduced to children at an earlier age, supporting literature such as Rogers (2017) and Flook et al. (2015). It was also recognised that children with particular emotional needs may need smaller groups and adapted learning environments to benefit most from the programme. These evaluations came from my own and adult observers' experience working with younger age groups and children experiencing behavioural difficulties. I had previously identified issues in mindfulness interventions specifically catering for children identified as lacking in particular qualities, such as resilience and attention (Carelse, 2013; Cain, 2012). The secular-therapeutic focus offered mindfulness as a tool aiming to fix individuals. Views from my study, however, recognised that some children may find it difficult accessing this programme, and identified a need for differentiated, personalised approaches, thus emphasising equity. While papers exploring mindfulness for neurological conditions, anxiety, attachment and trauma were discounted from this study, I had investigated other programmes, such as MindBe, (2020), Bailey et al., (2018) and Flook and Pinger (2017), aimed at children as young as nursery age. They also displayed how craft, stories, songs and movement activities could be utilised creatively and effectively.

Craft and movement activities were viewed by both adults and children as useful and enjoyable additions to the programme, resulting in another search for relevant literature. McCown et al. (2011) addressed the opinion that teachers should uphold the integrity of a mindfulness programme without attempting to improve or add their favourite pedagogical material. This highlighted a concern that space, openness and silence may be filled up with additional activities. While modifications were recognised as necessary for particular audiences, the essence of mindfulness was stressed as remaining the principle aim. This made me question whether the practical activities conducted during the afterschool club were in danger of disguising or distracting away from mindfulness aims and principles.

It has been illustrated that children could benefit from art-based, mindfulness activities in terms of understanding emotions while improving self-esteem, social skills and resilience (Coholic, 2011). Programmes involving movement also showed success in teaching awareness of connection between the breath and body, emotions and surroundings (Cruchon, 2009; Nhất Hạnh and Vriezen,



2008). It is interesting to note that, apart from one balancing exercise, Paws b had not included any activities that involve movement. Child created activities needed careful consideration (Willard, 2010). The enjoyment displayed when inventing art, breathing and movement activities, during my study, showed how children were beginning to understand, integrate, remember and own their mindfulness practice.

The issues of boredom and dealing with mistakes, illuminated only by the children, were, for me, the most interesting features of this evaluation. I had previously questioned how far children would be able to engage with mindfulness activities that could appear passive and lacking external stimulation, but children openly expressing boredom was something that I had not anticipated. The majority of comments on this subject came within the fourth, seventh and ninth week. The children's views stimulated some illuminating discussions related to feelings of confusion, frustration, distractions in class and potential opportunities for creative ideas. It was unfortunate that these conversations came from focus group participants outside of the Paws b lessons, as I am sure other children would have wished to contribute. Boredom is associated with lethargic, low levels of energy or agitated, high levels of energy (Williams and Hill, 2012). Mindfulness is about noticing both (Alidina and Marshall, 2019), however these states can be unproductive within the classroom, leading children to disengage with the lesson. Some children did admit to becoming disengaged but discussions after the lessons became opportunities for them to recognise boredom as a mindfulness opportunity to open doors to feelings (Arzamarski, 2019). This positive purpose for boredom has been supported by a number of articles within mindfulness publications (Boyce, 2019; Boyce and Dormet, 2019) advocated as an antidote to the hyper stimulation of modern lifestyles and an effective way to befriend all emotions, including uncomfortable and painful feelings.

Boredom is perceived as a major complaint of children and adolescents, contributing to chaotic stimulation seeking or disengaged apathy, and concerns are growing in relation to modern day environments and cultures (Williams and Hill, 2012). Postman's (2011) argument that television erodes childhood could easily be related to modern day technology. Social media can require little instruction nor make complex demands on the mind or behaviour. Digital babysitting could be accused of curbing creative, exploratory play and imagination in childhood, whilst encouraging reactive, impulsive responses through gaming. Belton (2016) warned of the danger of children losing such experiences and the ability to just observe the world around them. She saw society developing an expectation of being constantly occupied and stimulated. Without inner resources or responses to deal with boredom, Belton believed that children would be more prone to depression,

violence and destructive behaviour. The practice of mindfulness could present some worthwhile opportunities for addressing the concept of boredom and offer strategies for children to implement. Unfortunately, the programme under evaluation did not appear to embrace the opportunity to outwardly address and explore this feeling state.

The children spoke a great deal about their relief at not having to find the right answer in lessons. According to the MiSP (2015) teaching resources whatever comes forth must be welcomed, as children's responses have the greatest significance. The mindful teacher's role is to encourage curiosity, experimentation, questioning and respectful inquiry. Current school culture, focused on highly competitive testing systems (Adelman, 2018), is in danger of creating an unfavourable environment for such beliefs. The theory of growth mindset (Dweck, 2017), where mistakes are accepted as integral in the learning process, appeared to sit well with this programme's principles. Emphasis on the process of learning rather than outcome (Tugend, 2012) resonated with mindfulness, when seen as a path (Ergas, 2019). This process, in not being driven by outcome-based results, could offer a conducive context for Dweck and Tugend's theories. Returning again to my role as mindfulness facilitator, this position demanded very different teaching skills to those used within traditional curriculum areas.

## **Connection**

From my participant and evaluator perspectives, I began to recognise the ongoing importance of connection throughout this programme. Connection related to the enthusiasm the class felt for the stimulating resources and relevant learning objectives. Within individuals, connection began with awareness of breath and physical sensations to establish connection to the present moment. This allowed children to recognise internal dialogue, when ruminating on the past or experiencing anxiety about the future. In relation to thoughts and feelings, data showed pupils being inspired by the lessons and discussion to become aware of the connection between emotions, thoughts, bodily sensations and actions. This could encourage the children to better understand emotions and their impact on behaviour, focus, stress levels and relationships. The necessity of combining social-emotional learning with mindful awareness to make informed choices, especially in times of highly charged emotions, was consistently reinforced. Participant evaluations showed increasing self-awareness moving to enhancing awareness of others.

Developing a shared language through metaphors was an important concept in relation to connection through communication. These metaphors were constructed through programme

resources and activities. Children began to share experiences, recognising similarities and differences in perceptions, and this helped develop empathic responses. The bodily awareness of personal space and physical awareness of those around them also became apparent. Recognising how personal choices impact on others was yet another feature of connection.

This study has illuminated how Paws b effectively used both social-emotional learning and mindfulness. Lantieri and Zakrzewski (2015) explained how social and emotional learning and mindfulness were two distinctive areas that could be connected. Perceived successes of the programme illustrated mindfulness and social-emotional learning working in tandem. SEL works to a certain extent from the outside in, with focus on teaching strategies and skills. Mindfulness can be viewed moving from the inside out, drawing on the premise that individuals have the innate capacity for relationship building qualities such as empathy and kindness, once awareness is established. De Souza (2006) and Myers (2004) both championed activities that engaged and connected the inner and outer lives of children, as mindfulness and social-emotional learning did during the Paws b programme.

Theories from psychology (Rutstein, 2019; Leonard, 2019) highlighted the importance of connection between self and others to support wellbeing. Cozolino (2014) advocated the development of connection through teamwork, tapping into primitive social instincts to enhance powerful effects on wellbeing and the ability to learn. Eudaimonic wellbeing (Seligman, 2002) emphasized the connection of individuals to others, through altruistic acts of kindness, for the enhancement of purpose and happiness for all. The evaluations in this study displayed a movement from awareness of self, to awareness of others, strengthening connections with others, enhancing empathy and increasing positive, prosocial behaviour. My awareness and connection to the children as mindfulness facilitator has previously been explored in relation to new topics. The effect that increased connection between individuals and groups had on promoting social justice principles will be addressed during the conclusion. The importance of connection to, and consideration for, participants will now be addressed within an analysis of this democratic evaluation study.

## **Limitations**

Griffiths (1998) explored the contrast between repetition and replication in human science, epistemology and methodology. While a study may be replicated it can never be repeated as personal interpretations will differ at each stage. This was particularly important during my investigation as methods to investigate adult perspectives attempted to replicate the pilot study

with new teaching assistants. The divergent reactions from adults led to certain changes in methods, alongside ethical challenges created by personal information and circumstances conferred to me through my insider status. Data from the children led to new topics which may have not been visible during the pilot investigation. This investigation's focus on social justice, and growing experience in delivering the programme, led to new perspectives and interpretations with greater emphasis on certain concepts such as connection.

An analysis of diary entries illustrated my own views and perception of adults' views. The ongoing conversations were encouraged and documented by me while the written observation sheets allowed the adult participant voices to be heard first hand, to a certain extent. I found it difficult, at first, to encourage Blue to openly and confidently share her views with me. This may be due to difficult personal issues being experienced by her at this time. Brooklyn certainly showed greater interest and more engagement, but also revealed that she felt uncomfortable during some conversations. This may not have been in relation to the evaluation tasks but rather a personal characteristic, as she lacked confidence and could be prone to self-deprecation. The problems in establishing free flowing dialogue with adult participants may display a lack of communicative rationality, as Rienstra and Hook (2006) have suggested, but Griffith's (1998) concept of power also needed careful consideration. Establishing trusting relationships with all adult participants took time and patience.

Final interviews, along with concept map changes, at the end of the programme created the most effective opportunity for investigating adult perceptions. Participants were now able to discuss their experiences, observations and changing beliefs with reflection and increased confidence. There were still elements of co-created knowledge when I openly shared my opinions, but after reflecting on shifting power dynamics in discourse (Foucault, 1998), I felt that the adults finally recognised their ability to confidently share informed and knowledgeable views. Concept map changes were their sole creations, illustrating significant points in condensed form. As these individuals had not experienced using concept maps before, there was still a significant amount of uncertainty. They continued to talk through processes, decisions and questioned the usefulness of their creations. Focus group discussion created better ongoing opportunities to explore the children's perspectives through dedicated time each week. Significant changes also occurred through increased pupil knowledge, comfort and confidence which led to developing relationships and greater fluctuation of power within discourse. As the study progressed children shared their own ideas more freely and,

rather than looking to me for answers or confirmation, began to lead discussion and introduce new concepts I had not previously considered.

Some could say that responses from the children in the after-school club cannot completely reflect the learning achieved by other children in the class. They had gained 11 extra hours discussing and contemplating mindfulness. Engagement in the programme was certainly enhanced by participation in the after-school club through extended opportunities to reflect and discuss lessons learnt each week. However, adult observers were able to confirm that, through stimulating resources and productive discussion, other children within the class had gained a good understanding of programmes objectives. There were more girls than boys in the class and focus group participation reflected this. The five focus group boys did make contributions, but 11 out of the 12 girls were prone to saying more in discussion. Individual responses needed consideration within group discussion. Some children enjoyed speaking within the group, listened well to others and collaboratively developed knowledge. Other children responded better through direct questioning or seemed more at ease volunteering information and ideas in conversations away from others. Parent comments also illuminated changing beliefs and behaviours in some children. This information was not planned for and could only be sourced through comments made in my evaluator diary.

I came to recognize that the power of 'communicative action' (Habermas, 1987 p. 140) and 'discursive and participatory democracy-orientated evaluation' (Hanberger, 2006 p. 28) involved close collaboration with participants and relied on a number of conditions for success. Griffiths (1998) identified how difficult collaboration can be to achieve. At times my evaluative focus moved away from working with participants to considering the motives, actions and contexts of participants when issues arose with some adults and children.

My new experiences as a mindfulness facilitator and evaluator, alongside my ongoing role as a teacher within the school, have certainly been challenging. However, on reflection, the amount of detailed data collected, alongside my mindful position (Albrecht, 2016) allowed me to frequently consider and revise my interpretation of my own and other participant experiences. My views were, sometimes, in contrast to other people's perspectives, but this was only brought to light when there were more relaxed and open dialogical approaches in discussion. My own process of reflexivity and change, while encouraging participant reflection, has produced a set of evaluations that I feel illustrate emerging views and beliefs for all those who took part in this study. Confirmable findings

from my evaluation have been displayed through the ability to track data from sources, appendices and explanations of processes to help illustrate how conclusions were established.

Thomas and Atkinson's (2017) study of Paws b, as discussed in Chapter 2, related to visiting researchers seeking teacher and pupil views. Perceived benefits, reported by pupils and teachers, related to attention, meta-cognition, self-regulation, relaxation and relationships. Given their critical realist ontology and assumption of direct links between meaning, experience and language, themes have been identified at a semantic rather than latent level. These researchers wanted to reflect, rather than unravel, the reality that they had observed. This research did not refer to democratic evaluation, but after I had completed my study I saw similarities in their purpose and methods. My findings also related to adult and child participant views however I placed greater emphasis on collaborative effort and co-constructed perceptions. My study openly drew upon MacDonald's (1976) democratic evaluation framework but the process illustrated complexity due to my own position as participant. MacDonald highlighted the significant features of the democratic educator and these resonated with my position at certain times. I sought to represent a range of interests but did not want to diminish my own participatory voice. This led to complications in assimilating social justice aims and methods. My report did offer recommendations but only through the collaborative effort of all participants.

To illustrate my positions as participant and evaluator, I have answered each question on two levels within the concluding chapter. The first is more in keeping with Thomas and Atkinson's (2017) semantic level to reflect the reality of others. I did have political motivation and personal principles for conducting this investigation. Some could say that this coloured my analysis, as illustrated by Coelho (2006, p. 42) in his novel *The Alchemist*, 'I'm like everyone else- I see the world in terms of what I would like to see happen, not what actually does'. Even though I was closely involved, my mindful evaluator position allowed me to observe and become more aware of other realities. Acknowledging my veil of perception (Stefanino, 2007), recognising confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998) and use of communicative action (Habermas, 1987) gave another level of evaluation, to include exploratory, descriptive and explanatory elements in analysis. The question of social justice principles may seem to resonate more with deliberative democratic evaluation (House and Howe, 1999), however, by reflecting on my two positions within this study, I viewed my own values as placed within a participant mode. I believe that my evaluator reflexivity has allowed me to observe my advocacy and activism from a more neutral standpoint.

## Summary

This chapter began by addressing new topics which were illuminated by the data with reference to the associated literature. I then illustrated the significance of connection in relation to the programme, processes in mindfulness, individuals within communities, social justice and effectiveness of democratic evaluation. While the importance of connection has been developed using my own perspective, each participant has made significant contributions. Berlin (1993) used a poem by Archilochus to divide writers and thinkers into two categories: hedgehogs, who view the world through the lens of a single defining idea, and foxes, who draw on a wide variety of experiences and for whom the world cannot be reduced down to single ideas. This analogy works well with the ontological view of historical realism (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) with macro/micro levels of subjective interpretation (Saunders et al. 2012). As participants, we have all been foxes. As an evaluator I have used these perspectives to construct a hedgehog's view, but only within the parameters of this study. Limitations arise through the complexity of my insider status and changing roles from fox to hedgehog. Issues in defining a clear democratic evaluation process and recognising the cyclical nature of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2014) also need careful consideration.

## **Chapter 8 Conclusions and recommendations**

### **Introduction**

I begin this chapter by summarising my analysis of participant views to address the evaluation questions. For this I needed to openly display how my own agenda related to each question, data chosen and how evaluations were synthesised. I will set out what this study offers to the research community, in contributing to social justice aims through a democratic evaluation design framework. A mindfulness pedagogical process has identified the vital relationship with social-emotional learning while recognising the primary importance of facilitator roles. Referring back to present dichotomous positions separating mindfulness in education research, I suggest how a social justice perspective better suits the current context of schooling while fulfilling moral engagement. I will also address how far this new perspective on mindfulness could support children's current and future mental health, a concern from which this investigation originated. Recommendations for future programme developers include the importance of exploring personal aims and beliefs during facilitator training, and the benefits of developing lesson content in line with school staff and children's evaluations. What the school has gained from this initiative will be illustrated along with future directions for growth. I will then explore how my personal practice of mindfulness and my experiences as an insider evaluator have positively changed my own position, described within the introduction. Finally, possibilities for mindfulness and ways forward for positive change will be identified in light of current educational contexts and global events.

### **Evaluation Questions Addressed**

#### **1. To what extent can the programme be deemed as successful taking into account the views of participants?**

All participants agreed that the programme was effective and worthy of development. Most children, both within lessons and in group discussion, displayed increasing engagement and enjoyment for the Paws b programme. Given that this evaluation was supported by facilitator and teaching assistant observations, resources and activities were found to be stimulating, engaging and relevant through drawing on children's interests and experiences. Although some objectives were considered too advanced for children this age, a deepening level of understanding was achieved through discussion, constant review and clear links to previous objectives. Positive changes in attitudes and behaviours were observed by adults and identified by some children in relation to particular class members. Challenges identified by adults included the classroom environment, time



taken to address misunderstandings, and the recollection of painful memories, while children's responses raised the issue of boredom.

The data showed that the programme introduced necessary knowledge of the principles and functions of mindfulness in effective, staged steps to build on expanding awareness of inner self moving to outer experiences (Ergas, 2013) including the awareness of other people. Children were introduced to parts and functions of the brain. This was seen as informative and engaging by some children. Adults found these elements effective for aiding the understanding of abstract concepts relating to human behaviour, for example sustaining attention through pre-frontal cortex development, and different amygdala responses to perceived threat. The choice of breath as an anchor to the present moment was recognised, by both adults and children, as being the most utilised and effective strategy. The programme resources encouraged metaphors to aid self-expression and communication. Examples included feeling wobbly like a Weeble, confusion as a glitter jar in momentum, torchlight visually displaying focused attention and worries heightened by imagination from the storytelling mind. The hot cross bun analogy emphasised the connection between thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and actions. There appeared to be a developing understanding of specific contexts that require non-judgement, acceptance or reasoned choice through discernment.

These conclusions were based on participant views and as such could be perceived as democratic evaluation (Kushner, 2017). My evaluations, based on personal experiences, co-created knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978) and continuous reflection on theories are as follows. The process of mindfulness introduced by this programme could be viewed as heightened awareness of conscious thinking, to facilitate both serenity and insight (Bodhi, 2011) depending on context and purpose. This resonated with Buddhist principles of mindfulness when conceptualisations are clearly explained, demonstrated and understood within the lessons. The quality of teaching is a highly important consideration as any misunderstandings, directly relayed or not sufficiently explored by the facilitator, would have a significant impact on the effectiveness and integrity of the programme.

The fusion of mindfulness and social-emotional learning, guided by the awareness and skills of the teacher, support the integration of inner and outer experiences to enhance learning outcomes (Myers, 2004). This also shows how mindfulness develops, but cannot automatically address, all aspects necessary for effective social and emotional learning. Challenges identified within the lessons, as described above, could be used as effective opportunities to reflect on strategies and

solutions. The data illustrates the foundation for a mindful moral agenda, by including awareness of informed choice and increasing awareness of others. This aspect of my study is further explained within the next question.

## **2. To what extent have children engaged with social justice principles through the programme?**

This question addressed the need for a moral based, educational programme that would be accepted and encouraged within the current context of a secular primary school. Theme 3 data illustrates evidence of some children showing increased awareness of others, allowing them to consider how they would feel in another person's situation. This primarily began with recognising that certain behaviour could disturb others in class. There were then some examples, in later lessons, of children thinking about alternative actions that could help other people and the environment. This came after they had explored an understanding of themselves in relation to thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and informed actions. The focus on fairness allowed young children to explore social justice principles at an accessible level of understanding.

Some could say that the children who displayed these empathetic responses may already have a high level of emotional intelligence and compassion. A study such as mine cannot prove that any changes in children's behaviours or beliefs are a direct result of these lessons, nevertheless data showed children beginning to express ideas about changing their own behaviour to consider and help others. Talking openly about consideration and compassion would most likely have a positive effect on other children too. This programme can be viewed as a mindfulness tool or teaching approach, but how that tool is used, as with all education, is very much within the facilitator's and the teacher's hands. I believe this study does show the development of a mindfulness social justice framework but also highlights the importance of teacher beliefs and the effect on programme delivery.

My facilitator role allowed children to exercise their awareness of making informed choices. Increased personal agency was translated to situations and communities within and outside of school. Adults and children made comments on how they perceived some behaviour changing through greater consideration for others. This was witnessed within school along with children's own recounts of using mindfulness, inside and outside of school, for improving their own sense of wellbeing and for the intent of benefitting others, thus illustrating growing awareness of eudaimonic wellbeing.

Again, elements of democratic evaluation can be recognised as the above conclusions were fundamentally based on participant views. I will now set out my own evaluations with reference to theories. While I was offering the children greater control of the lessons, without fear of making mistakes, they still needed to pass that control back to me in order to make the lessons work. I felt that Foucault's (1980) concept of fluctuating, negotiated power was in evidence here. After increasing awareness of informed choice and awareness of others, children were now applying these concepts to real life situations whilst recognising how their actions affected others. The study's participants were initially unaware of this evaluation question, unlike the other questions that openly warranted their evaluations. This may contradict the nature of democratic evaluation (MacDonald, 1976) but I was also a participant. This question was of particular personal and professional importance to my purpose for the study. Data showed that both adults and children were increasingly aware of the development of social justice principles. Once I had shared my interpretation of findings, in accessible and appropriate language, I have every reason to believe the participants were in agreement.

Analysis for this question, up to this point, has relied on data from the third theme, relating to relationships within the class, including the facilitator, and the developing awareness of interconnection between self and others. There is also a strengthening connection between learning within the classroom and application outside of lessons, increasing relevance for children and recognition that individuals have agency to act in the best interests of their communities. The data illustrated here is weighted towards adult perceptions, possibly due to the variety of sources including evaluator diary entries, adult interviews and subsequent concept map creations. This is in contrast to the singular origin of focus group discussion for pupil voice.

Elements of social justice, however, can be identified throughout this study. To strengthen the case that this programme does support social justice principles, as illustrated by children's responses, I have drawn upon pupil voice data beyond the theme of connection. Osterling's (2005) key themes supply a clear framework in which elements of social justice education can be identified. While some of the data compiled within Appendix 17 (p. 188) has already been attributed to other themes, this shows how certain responses have multiple meanings and can be difficult to classify within thematic analysis. Data has been collated to show children's understanding of fairness and equity of opportunity, freedom of expression, recognition of similarities, appreciation of differences, empathy through multiple perspectives, respecting yet questioning authority and intentions to make the world a better place.

### **3. What suggestions are proposed for programme development?**

Changes to the programme had been made in response to my pilot study findings. The previous adult observer, Sadie, suggested that shorter lessons over a longer time would be beneficial, as Thomas and Atkinson (2017) had recommended. Sadie also exhibited strong feelings about children needing more practice both inside and outside the classroom. These suggestions were acted upon, first through making shorter lessons cover eleven weeks. I found that through my ongoing questioning and reinforcement during this study, personal anecdotes illustrated that a significant number of children were recognising opportunities and applying mindfulness in their everyday lives. Clearly, evaluation of any new programme needs to be ongoing, so I intend to promote this for any future programme cycles. I propose to pass over to the school, both adults and children, the approaches that have been a part of my evaluation.

In comparison to the other questions, these evaluations were led most strongly by the other participants. This may come from the point at which these views were formulated and expressed. The other questions encouraged a development throughout the period of investigation. Through time participants gained knowledge and grew in confidence to be able to formulate more defined opinions via later discussions and final interviews. Most data from Theme 4 came at the end of the study. I was able to 'act as broker' (MacDonald, 1976 p. 134). I felt a particular neutrality when considering responses raised by this question, yet evaluations could be potentially significant for programme developers and the school. My role as evaluator drew upon comparisons with other studies and resources from similar primary school programmes, such as MindBe (2020) and Smiling Mind (Bailey et al., 2018).

Participants recognised that there was a need to introduce children to mindfulness strategies at an earlier age. Additional age-appropriate resources and activities would be required to cover Early Years and Key Stage One. Participants also recognised that children with specific emotional and behavioural needs may need a different approach to class-based lessons. While MiSP have yet to address the needs of a younger audience, other primary curriculums have already supplied popular programmes for younger children in Australia and the USA.

Adult participants also recognised the need to introduce mindfulness to staff for both personal and programme benefits. Given that Paws b training is costly in both time and finance, it is debatable whether adequate in-house MiSP training could occur without jeopardising the integrity of the programme. At present I am able to cover all classes for programme delivery but additional staff

members could help build important grass roots advocacy (Bristow, 2017). Ann has shown increasing interest from observing the lessons and being an active participant in this study. Offering mindfulness to school staff was an important consideration for all adult participants, especially since Brooklyn had noted work-related stress as a factor that could lead to staff resistance for introducing mindfulness. Additional materials for adults would be needed to address this. Compelling evidence for development may also include advertisement for improving class behaviour and children publicly advocating mindfulness to both staff and school governors. While the adult observers spoke of apprehension regarding parental resistance, the head teacher and children expressed a strong wish to include parents in developing mindfulness within the school community. Educating parents on the secular nature of mindfulness may avoid misconceptions that could hinder acceptance.

Both adult and child participants suggested a more creative, hands-on approach. Findings highlighted the importance of experiential activities to enhance student's engagement in mindfulness sessions; although additional content will need to reflect the interests of a particular cohort. This class enjoyed art and craft but another class may be more enthused by movement activities. In terms of additional time for mindfulness within an already busy curriculum, children suggested ongoing after-school activities as the programme itself only demands up to twelve hours during Key Stage 2. In relation to the needs of additional practice and ongoing commitment, the literature in Chapter 2 highlighted that integrating mindfulness into an established health and wellbeing curriculum would be a workable alternative for implementation. This was a significant evaluation outcome for the school as it led to the purchase of an additional mindfulness based SEL programme for developing objectives throughout each year group.

## **Process, Purpose and Context**

I have identified a process for a pedagogical framework as a potential addition to mindfulness in education evaluation and research. This information may also aid teachers during facilitator training to enhance understanding and effectiveness in delivery of lessons. Evaluation of the Paws b programme illustrated a fusion of mindfulness and social-emotional learning. This was mostly recognised by my observations, drawing on previous PSHE teaching experience across Key Stage 2, but was also supported by children's responses when displaying heightened understanding of learning outcomes as observed by adults. My experiences as teacher and mindfulness facilitator drew my attention to different processes needed during mindfulness and SEL activities. This led me to consider pedagogical differences when moving between teaching mindfulness and social-emotional learning, but I found no literature to substantiate this.

The purpose of the mindfulness facilitator could be considered a possible driving force for establishing honourable aims that promote fairness and compassion. Paws b is criticised for being a science-based tool for compliance (Purser, 2019). This study showed the power that individual teachers hold to encourage children to think of others and empower them to make positive changes both inside and outside the classroom. MiSP has strong scientific foundations and is accused of lacking what critics refer to as ethical foci (Simpson, 2017). My evaluation inferred that a practitioner can apply their own principled beliefs to teaching. Social justice does not put the collective above the individual nor the individual above the collective (Griffiths, 1998) and this has been a constant reference throughout my delivery. This also links to the power in those personalised, subtle changes educators can make when teaching within their own classrooms (Fullan, 2015). There has been emphasis on evaluating programme content and potential benefits of mindfulness, in previous literature, without recognising the importance of how teachers adapt content and change emphasis in their own individual ways.

Current educational contexts need careful consideration in light of years of neo-liberal influence. Contemporary mindfulness discourse depicts two narratives, reflecting different interests and purposes. Buddhist origins present a broad moral path through promoting compassion and wisdom. Secular applications frame the practice as a tool for the individual, open to judgements on the dangers of individualism, commercialism and ineffective, short term strategies. This has led to fractured, dichotomous literature related to mindfulness within education. Social justice has the potential to connect research communities as it should not encourage polarization. Without being overtly political or religious, social justice can offer a moral, purposeful framework for mindfulness in education. I have found that through my emphasis on encouraging awareness and consideration for others, together with the recognition of individual power and responsibility to make positive change, this programme has been able to highlight social justice principles effectively to many of the children.

My initial concern, and initiation of this study, came from reading about a 'mental health crisis' amongst young people. Mindfulness can support individuals by offering tools to combat stress, but the social justice principles of connection and collaboration extends individual change towards contributing to a fairer society. Recent years have shown that people are deeply divided in their conceptions of the good society and how to achieve this. Bristow (2019 p. 1) illustrated this point well 'Why paint inner development as a barrier to better systems? Amid crisis and complexity, we need both.' There are problems with a fixed vision of social change. Social justice emphasises the

role of the individual alongside structural, societal change. The awareness of mindfulness, introduced through Paws b, shows potential in the consideration of contexts, individual needs, agency, perspective, community and collaboration. Individual teachers now need to share a common purpose for fairness and justice in the promotion of positive, equitable change for the future.

## Emerging Considerations

Evaluating the possibility of Paws b being integrated into primary education requires a balanced and pragmatic view, questioning how far the programme can intersect with school politics and culture. There needs to be a consideration of present school curricula which may provoke resistance to an initiative such as this. The current 'quasi-philosophy of education' (Jarvis 2021 p. 2) originated from the revamping of the national curriculum during Gove's time as Secretary of State for Education (2010-2014), and has been further perpetuated by his successors. According to Jarvis these reforms were based heavily on the theories of the American education academic E.D. Hirsh. This is confirmed by an essay from the then School's Minister for the think tank Policy Exchange, aptly entitled 'How E.D. Hirsh came to shape UK government policy' (Gibb, 2015). Hirsh (1987) focused on the promotion of cultural literacy through predetermined facts, ideas and knowledge, that he believed people needed to know in order to operate effectively as citizens. To achieve this, children would need to learn facts in a highly structured and organised way. This created the imperative to get back to basics with the delivery of a robust and detailed core curriculum. The mode of teaching intended to inculcate this bank of knowledge drew on a memorisation process reducing learning to the regurgitation of acceptable answers for narrowly framed questions. While Hirsch's theory received a significant amount of criticism within the US, it is evident, from my teacher's perspective, that the government continue to retain a slavish adherence to this fixed construction of teaching and learning, creating a dictatorial curriculum with relentless formal assessments used to publicly judge schools.

A review of these macro-level developments illuminates some serious potential limitations for a programme such as Paws b. Firstly, there is the need for dedicated time to implement a new initiative within an overburdened curriculum, groaning under the weight of facts. Additionally, its content and purpose could be viewed as very much the antithesis of everything that has previously been valued and promoted within education. Many younger teachers are products of Hirsch's convictions and may have never experienced anything significantly different in school. But this does not mean that change is a Sisyphean task. After significant periods home-schooling, experiencing

firsthand how formulaic, irrelevant and joyless much of the content can appear to be, parents are starting to take to newspapers (Ferguson, 2021) and social media to express their exasperation. The government's primary concerns appear to be driven by the fear of children falling behind in preparation for their next assessment. Yet there are still overwhelming concerns regarding the nation's long term mental health and a relentless search for effective strategies to combat further anticipated deterioration. Post pandemic education could be fertile ground for new ideas with a radical refocus on children's needs and priorities.

Educationalists and policy makers may evaluate this programme in a variety of ways. Mindfulness has moved into many modern, secular settings, including medicine, business corporations, the military, prisons, parenting classes and so on. This shows success in transferability, as different values can be attributed to mindfulness depending on the context, interests and priorities of a sector, or even a particular school. Nonetheless, components of Paws b could be viewed as either positive or negative at a micro-level, based on an individual's standpoint. Perspectives are formed through a myriad of factors including previous and current experiences, roles within education, teaching styles, relationships with children, personal beliefs and interests, adaptability to new ideas etc. The values that a mindfulness programme appeals to, and the resistance that it may provoke, depends on specific individual and collective factors which can only be displayed through a collection of detailed case studies. This requirement will be discussed later on.

There are also opposing viewpoints within a single study. An example of this was addressed through my data on perceived challenges. Adults highlighted the uncomfortable and cramped classroom environment, the lack of time available to address misunderstandings and the children's distress when recalling painful memories. The children also spoke of experiencing feelings of boredom on a number of occasions. Some may consider these significant issues however I saw these events as positive through initializing opportunities to discuss with the children problems and potential solutions. There may be some who believe that personal opinions had clouded my judgement, however I feel that the data supported my conclusions and I was able to justify my position. There will also be queries made by the reader that I would not have considered during this study. Reasons for this will be reflected upon further.

One such example could be a perceived tension between such activities as the bell promoting pupil attention, or specific techniques to manage anger. These elements of the programme may seem conducive to behaviourism, as they appear in conflict with intentions to enhance students'



intellectual autonomy, displaying dichotomy between empowering programme aims and disempowering procedures. Yet if specific roles and contexts are considered, a teacher may see these strategies as an effective way to maintain a positive working environment in a busy classroom of 30 children. As can be displayed by both adult and child responses, many participants enjoyed the positive effect these ongoing activities encouraged. In my dual role, reflecting on both theory and practice, I can see a connection in both positions. The children understood that these activities benefitted the whole class, as they did not raise an individual's right not to engage in the lesson or express anger to the detriment of those around them. In such a way a social justice approach to managing behaviour is conducive to children's rights through considering the needs of the group. This does not mean that an exhausted teacher working with a challenging class would initially consider social justice principles. Nonetheless I found that the children's exploration of reasons behind such actions strengthened the effectiveness of these techniques. Now understanding has been established, the children may wish to collectively choose their own stimulus for a quiet classroom, or their own strategies for calming down.

My multiple roles as facilitator, evaluator and teacher within the school may have created both advantages and drawbacks for participants, especially if I was also viewed as curriculum promoter. A change in environment, through moving classrooms before after-school sessions, may have aided the children's recognition that my role, and theirs, had changed. Some children appeared more animated and willing to express their opinions during these discussions. Smaller group numbers could have also encouraged their critical focus and confidence to share. Adult participant convictions grew throughout the study, and views were shared with greater depth and certainty during the final interviews. This may have been due to a growing understanding of mindfulness or even the extended time for discussion, away from the classroom and children, which encouraged a more relaxed atmosphere. However, at this point in the study, they may have finally been able to recognize me as an evaluator, rather than facilitator and programme advocate. Lessons had come to an end and there was now space for reflection.

The importance of recognizing how an individual's position affects their perceptions has great significance in terms of how I translated my multiple roles alongside the opinions of others. I felt that my roles required shifting from one position to the other during the investigation. The mindful evaluation methodology (p. 48) related to events during lessons and data collection. Being fully present allowed increased awareness of situations, and greater responsiveness to participants, while reducing tendencies to make judgements based on my perceptions. I was also able to recognise and

note personal feelings during these occasions. My evaluator role involved repeated reflection after events. Shifting my position between facilitator and evaluator perceptions continued throughout the study, allowing opportunities to question participants if more clarity and greater understanding was required. There was also the consideration that comments could possibly reflect more about the beliefs of the observer than the observed, as in Eliza's comments regarding Sponge Bob (p. 106).

Although I felt that I had become fully immersed in my more objective evaluator role during data analysis, I was initially attracted to mindfulness before the study and have acknowledged my own enthusiasm when teaching the lessons. In terms of emotional and psychological issues, both initiating and evaluating a programme as an insider was fraught with challenges. While a visiting evaluator would be better placed to observe and note a programme's perceived failure, my position as Paws b promoter and facilitator gave me a personal and professional investment for successful outcomes. This orientation created some potentially fervent interactions with the school governor (p. 5) and adult participants (p. 65) when I sensed opposition and lack of support. The mindful ability to respond, rather than react, allowed me to consider available opportunities and seek assistance from the headteacher, which became important factors for programme acceptance and development.

The acknowledgement of my emotional commitment created relevant data, and would have been a significant factor for increasing participant engagement with the programme. This was, however, embedded within my facilitator role. The ability to step away, through increased distance from classroom experiences and continued reflection on data, allowed for greater disengagement as an evaluator. This criticality will continue to develop as I move away from teaching children towards research, creating opportunities to review and build upon my conclusions at some point in the future. Nonetheless, this current evaluation could appear to advocate mindfulness and be vulnerable to confirmation bias. Those that question this study's validity may, in themselves, be reflecting their own bias based on previous experiences and perceptions. Of course, there are benefits when conclusions provoke challenge, as argumentation through communicative action (Habermas, 1987) can lead to new ideas and knowledge. However, it is challenging to defend questions on credibility when an investigation, such as this, stands alone. Ongoing evaluations of mindfulness within education may uncover a montage of values and views. Yet if teachers are able to embrace evaluation as a process in which to explore their own beliefs and power to promote positive change, my contribution will be significant.

## Recommendations

This study has a number of recommendations to offer the research community. Qualitative methodologies explore participant perspectives to provide descriptions of processes and contexts. The lack of qualitative and exploratory research for children and mindfulness leads to issues when investigating the mechanisms by which mindfulness exerts its impact, only allowing a generalised perspective on its processes and potential benefits. I have found few qualitative investigations of mindfulness in schools, especially involving children in primary. Most originate from Australasia, either predominantly involving teacher or pupil views. Qualitative studies involving UK primary schools are emerging (e.g. Thomas and Aitkinson, 2017), however I have yet to find investigations conducted by a teacher from the school taking on the role of the mindfulness facilitator and evaluator/researcher. This study offers a unique perspective by providing a first-person account of issues and strategies used by a teacher delivering mindfulness within a primary school setting.

Teachers can provide important insights on teaching new programmes which can further develop evaluation and research. Some may argue that difficulties can occur when encouraging teachers to take on such projects (Zhou, 2012), for instance lack of time, resources, guidance and knowledge of methodology, alongside the ongoing research process pressures and frustrations. My position in school certainly benefitted this investigation in a variety of ways, but lack of class teacher responsibilities also gave me additional time to invest in my studies. Recently members of staff were encouraged to conduct their own research in groups regarding aspects of education and neurodiversity. Time was given to plan, research and share findings in staff meetings. This project was greeted with diligence and enthusiasm by many of the teachers. It cannot be assumed that teachers are not willing to take part in research and evaluation activities.

Research for social justice, while emerging as a theoretical framework in its own right (Griffiths, 1998), is usually concerned with forms of oppression within marginalized communities (Atkins and Duckworth, 2019). This investigation shows how equity can be offered to a whole class, without discrimination, through both aims and methods. It also displays how social justice should not be confined to higher education settings. Links can be made to a democratic, evaluation framework (Kushner, 2017) and mindful researcher/evaluator methodology (Albrecht, 2016) to achieve democracy through transparent, reflexive evaluation processes without a blinkered push towards social justice.

Participant evaluation activities could offer the Mindfulness in Schools Project notable ideas for programme and resource development. Research on the website (MiSP, 2020) either relates to quantitative studies, attempting to show empirical evidence for improved attention and wellbeing, or a small number of narrative school case studies used as advertising. There is also an online tool to show impact through staff and child percentages related to enjoyment and usefulness along with a few carefully chosen teacher and pupil comments. This work offers an in-depth analysis of adult and child views which include qualitative evidence of success alongside recommendations. Suggestions include addressing the concept of boredom openly, an additional programme that introduces mindfulness to a younger audience along with new opportunities for creative and tactile lesson activities. There is also evidence that teacher training should focus on pedagogical strategies, heighten the social-emotional learning connection (Lantieri and Zakrzewski, 2015) and relay spiritual values that can be effectively translated into a secular programme with sensitivity and care (Monteiro, 2017).

The school is already using this evaluation study to develop mindfulness implementation. While Paws b is continuing to be taught to Year 3 annually, it was decided that the best way to embed mindfulness in other year groups was through integration with social and emotional learning as advocated by Gerszberg (2017). The school has now invested in Jigsaw, a comprehensive PSHE programme underpinned by mindfulness philosophy and practice, available for primary schools to teach PSHE across the whole school (Wolstenholme et al., 2016). Staff activities take place during morning briefings on a regular basis and there are plans in place to open up mindfulness training to parent groups. The children's mindfulness after-school club, now led by Ann, continues throughout the year, incorporating craft and movement activities, alongside stories and discussion. Pupil voice groups are becoming a feature within other subject areas and increasingly used in staff and governor meetings.

There are a number of options for ongoing evaluations within the current case setting. There are limitations in any short-term educational activity, however my ongoing observations continue to add evidence for impact. This year a boy within the class was diagnosed with cancer. Ninja, his best friend, became upset and uncharacteristically violent during lunchtime and was brought to the head teacher. As she tried to settle him, Ninja announced that he knew what to do then sat quietly, concentrating on Paws b breathing strategies. Once he had regained his composure and told her that, while he was still felt very sad, breathing had helped him control his behaviour. The head teacher came to find me that day to discuss the incident. While remaining concerned about the boy,

she was particularly impressed by the way he had recalled and effectively utilized strategies learnt from the preceding year. I did explain that mindfulness was often referred to and practised during my PSHE weekly lessons with the class. This school evaluation shows that mindfulness is achievable and beneficial in my primary school, however the head teacher recognises that this can only be fulfilled through ongoing practice and immersion in the daily lives of pupils and staff. The continued development of mindfulness with ongoing evaluation will require significant time and effort. It will be interesting to follow this cohort's journey. Similar investigations with another Year 3 class could supply additional, comparative evidence, as would an evaluation of Jigsaw, the newly acquired whole school scheme.

In terms of my own teaching, I continue to use metaphors introduced by Paws b, include mindfulness activities in my lessons and focus heavily on the exploration of fairness within the classroom. I have also experienced profound change in my professional life. As described in the introduction, my own feelings of injustice made me search for a platform from which to be acknowledged and make a positive difference to our school. I have become increasingly aware of changes I can make as a teacher. Without the power of a management position, I have managed to introduce an effective, school-based strategy at grass roots level. This study has given me renewed enthusiasm in my work, through academic challenge and personal significance. I am again appreciating my teaching responsibilities and pedagogical relationships with the children alongside more positive, collaborative relationships with management and staff. My change came initially from within but has had a strong impact on my outer world and, hopefully, on those around me.

## **Ongoing Reflections**

During my years in teaching, I have witnessed numerous initiatives that appear and disintegrate at, what feels like, an increasingly frenetic pace. These changes come from above, passed down to teachers as prescribed curriculum content with specific sets of requirements. Evaluations relate to how well instructions are executed. I cannot remember ever being asked to share my views or experiences of how I have used a new educational strategy. Here I share my current thoughts on evaluation and connection evolving through my experiences of this study.

I believe teachers should connect with those they teach, adapting educational programmes to best meet the current and future needs of children. For this to happen children require opportunities to shape the curriculum through their own evaluations. One teacher can be empowered to initiate whole school change, by utilizing the power of pupil voice through listening to, collecting and

effectively sharing children's views. Teachers need to connect and collaborate with one another to share experiences and innovative ideas with confidence and honesty. To extend my investigation further, this mindfulness programme could be evaluated in a diversity of classrooms where teachers draw on a secure understanding of mindfulness combined with their own reflections on the purposes of education. A facilitator forum would create a space for sharing ideas and evaluations if a safe, inclusive environment was maintained.

I utilized Paws b training and resources, with deepening insight gained from my own experiences and those of the children and teaching assistants. Nonetheless, I have recognised how challenging the dual roles of facilitator and evaluator can be. While my own developing mindfulness granted me the space to explore personal beliefs and acknowledge alternative perspectives, this may not be an effective strategy for everyone undertaking such an investigation. A question arises as to how educators can learn to balance teaching and evaluator roles effectively with increased objectivity and reflection. Additional adult observations, offering evaluations alongside solidarity and support, can be highly effective in this respect.

In relation to mindfulness and social justice, I began this investigation by illustrating the need for change in light of growing mental health concerns. There is now a time of great uncertainty and fear heightened by the global pandemic. Social inequality, racial injustice and escalating mental health disorders have become immediate concerns for schools, exposing the need for new awareness and collaboration. Contemplative practice, backed by science, can look beyond illusions of separation, shift perspectives and unleash creative energies to both inspire individuals and transform societies. I fear my school's current focus on children's wellbeing and increasing equity will not be sustained, as concerns begin to drift towards lost learning in English and Maths resulting from school closures during lockdown. In the early 1920s, during a vaudeville circuit, Helen Keller, with the help of her tutor Ann Sullivan, concluded her speech by stating, 'We live by each other and for each other. Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much' (Lash, 1980 p. 489). This is a quote that, I believe, summarises mindfulness, social justice, democratic evaluation and education so well. Schools need connection and unity to remain mindfully aware and responsive to the fundamental needs of children.

## References

- Adelman, D. (2018) *School No Place for Children*, London, Amazon.
- Ager, K., Albrecht, N. J. and Cohen, P. M. (2015) 'Exploring students' perspectives of Mindfulness', *Psychology*, vol. 06, no.7, pp. 896–914.
- Albrecht, N., Albrecht, P. and Cohen, M. (2012) 'Mindfully Teaching in the Classroom: A Literature Review', *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 37, no. 12.
- Albrecht, N. and Vell, A. (2014) 'Wellness: A conceptual framework for mindfulness research and practice', paper presented at The Internal Conference on Health, Wellness and Society, Vancouver, March.
- Albrecht, N. (2016) Teachers teaching mindfulness with children: An interpretative phenomenological analysis, Doctoral Dissertation, Flinders University.
- Albrecht, N., Bucu, A. and Ager, K. (2018) 'Rome wasn't built in a day: School counsellors' perspectives of teaching children mindfulness', *Australian Counselling Research Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 3-17.
- Alidina, S. and Marshall, J. (2019) How to Overcome Boredom or Agitation with Mindfulness, *Mindfulness Workbook for Dummies*, [Online]. Available at <https://www.dummies.com/religion/spirituality/how-to-overcome-boredom-or-agitation-with-mindfulness/> (Accessed 1 March 2020).
- Aloni, N. (2007) *Enhancing Humanity*, Dordrecht, Springer.
- Alonso, J. (2012) 'Burden of Mental Disorders based on the World Mental Health Surveys', *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria*, vol.34, no.1, pp. 7-11.
- Anderson, P. (2002) 'Assessment and Development of Executive Function (EF) During Childhood', *Child Neuropsychology*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 71-82.
- Anna Freud Centre (2019) INSPIRE, *Annafreud.org*, [Online]. Available at <https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/our-work-with-schools/education-for-wellbeing/inspire/> (Accessed 19 February 2020)
- Armstrong, T. (2019) *Mindfulness in The Classroom*, Alexandria, Virginia, ASCD.
- Arzamarski, C. (2019) 'The Art of Boredom: Practicing Mindfulness, Conversation, and Creativity', *The Brown University Child and Adolescent Behaviour Letter*, vol. 35, no. 7, pp. 8-8.
- Atkins, L. and Duckworth, V. (2019) *Research Methods for Social Justice and Equity in Education*, London, Bloomsbury
- Bailey, N., Chambers, R., Hassed, C., Jones, A., Owen, J. and Wootten, A. (2018) Smiling Mind - Evidence-based guidelines for mindfulness in school, *Smilingmind.com*, [Online]. Available at <https://view.publitas.com/smiling-mind/mindfulnessguidelines> (Accessed 1 April 2020).
- Bailie, C., Kuyken, W. and Sonnenberg, S. (2011) 'The experiences of parents in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy', *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 103-119.
- Ball, S. J. (1995) 'Intellectuals or technicians? The urgent role of theory in educational studies' in Hammersley, M. (ed.) (2007) *Educational Research and Evidence-based Practice* (Published in association with The Open University), London, Sage Publications
- Bannirchelvam, B., Bell, K. and Costello, S. (2017) 'A Qualitative Exploration of Primary School Students' Experience and Utilisation of Mindfulness', *Contemporary School Psychology*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 304-316.

Barbour, R. (2013) *Doing Focus Groups*, Los Angeles, Sage.

Barr, S. (2019) Children to be taught relaxation techniques and breathing exercises to improve mental health, *The Independent*, 4<sup>th</sup> February, [Online]. Available at <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/mental-health-schools-mindfulness-relaxation-breathing-children-pupils-a8761801.html> (Accessed 19 February 2020).

Bartley, C. (2019) Bishop tells schools to ban 'yoga' and 'mindfulness', *Kilkennynow.ie*, 19<sup>th</sup> October, [Online]. Available at <https://kilkennynow.ie/bishop-in-neighbouring-diocese-asks-schools-to-replace-yoga-with-prayers/> (Accessed 19 February 2020).

Beitel, M., Ferrer, E. and Cecero, J. (2005) 'Psychological mindedness and awareness of self and others', *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 61, no. 6, pp. 739-750.

Belton, T. (2016) How kids can benefit from boredom, *University of East Anglia Research Blog*, [Online]. Available at <https://www.uea.ac.uk/research/blogs-and-comment/how-kids-can-benefit-from-boredom> (Accessed 18 December 2019).

Benn, R., Akiva, T., Arel, S. and Roeser, R. (2012) 'Mindfulness training effects for parents and educators of children with special needs.', *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 48, no. 5, pp. 1476-1487.

Berger, R., Brenick, A. and Tarrasch, R. (2018) 'Reducing Israeli-Jewish Pupils' Outgroup Prejudice with a Mindfulness and Compassion-Based Social-Emotional Program', *Mindfulness*, pp. 1-12.

Berila, B. (2016) *Integrating Mindfulness into Anti-Oppression Pedagogy*, New York, Routledge.

Berlin, I. (1993) *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History*, Chicago, I.R. Dee.

Bernay, R., Graham, E., Devcich, D., Rix, G. and Rubie-Davies, C. (2016) 'Pause, breathe, smile: a mixed-methods study of student well-being following participation in an eight-week, locally developed mindfulness program in three New Zealand schools', *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 90-106.

Bishop, S. (2004) 'Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition', *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, vol. 11, no.3, pp. 230-241.

Blake, B. and Pope, T. (2008) 'Developmental Psychology: Incorporating Piaget's and Vygotsky's Theories in Classrooms', *Journal of Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives in Education*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 59-67.

Block-Lerner, J., Adair, C., Plumb, J., Rhatigan, D. and Orsillo, S. (2007) 'The case for mindfulness-based approaches in the cultivation of empathy: Does nonjudgmental, present-moment awareness increase capacity for perspective-taking and empathic concern?', *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 501-516.

Bodhi, B. (2011) 'What does mindfulness really mean?' A canonical perspective', *Contemporary Buddhism*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 19-39.

Boyce, B. (2019) The Bright Side of Boredom, *Mindful*, 12<sup>th</sup> December, [Online]. Available at <https://www.mindful.org/the-bright-side-of-boredom/> (Accessed 5 January 2020).

Boyce, B. and Dornat, S. (2019) Being Bored is A Gift: Here's How to Use It, *Mindful*, 14<sup>th</sup> November, [Online]. Available at <https://www.mindful.org/being-bored-is-a-gift-heres-how-to-use-it/> (Accessed 19 December 2019).

Brackett, M. and Rivers, S. (2014) 'Transforming students' lives with social and emotional learning', in Pekrun, R. and Linnenbrink-Garcia, I. (eds.). *International handbook of emotions in education*, New York, Taylor & Francis.



Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 3, pp. 77-101.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2014) *Successful Qualitative Research*, London, SAGE.

Bristow, J. (2017) How to Avoid a Poorly Designed School Mindfulness Program, *Mindful*, [Online] Available at <https://www.mindful.org/4-signs-poorly-designed-school-mindfulness-programs/> (Accessed 7 June 2017).

Bristow, J. (2019) Time for new thinking about mindfulness and social change, *Opendemocracy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, [Online]. Available at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/time-new-thinking-about-mindfulness-and-social-change/> (Accessed 16 April 2020).

Brookfield, S. (2000) 'The concept of critical reflective practice', in Wilson, A. Hayes, E. (eds.) (2007) *Handbook of adult and continuing education*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Brown, R. (2011) 'The Mindful Teacher as the Foundation of Contemplative Pedagogy' in Judith Simmer-Brown, J. and Grace, F. (eds.) *Meditation and the Classroom: Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies* Albany: New York Press.

Burdick, D. (2014) *Mindfulness skills for kids and teens*, Eau Claire, PESI Publishing and Media.

Burnett, R. (2011) 'Mindfulness in Schools: Learning Lessons from the Adults, Secular and Buddhist', *Buddhist Studies Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 79-120.

Burns, D. (2017) Buddhist Meditation and Depth Psychology, *Buddhanet.net*, [Online] Available from: <http://www.buddhanet.net/depth.htm> (Accessed 29 May 2017).

Burrows, L. (2011) 'Practising relational wellbeing in school communities' in *Mental health and wellbeing: Educational perspectives*. South Australia: Shannon Research Press, pp. 213-223

Cain, M. (2012) A Qualitative Analysis of Children's Perspectives of Mindfulness, Doctor of Counselling in Psychology University of East London.

Campion, J. and Rocco, S. (2009) 'Minding the Mind: The Effects and Potential of a School-Based Meditation Programme for Mental Health Promotion', *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, vol.2, no.1, pp. 47-55.

Carelse, B. (2013) Children's experiences of learning Mindfulness to help develop their attentional skills [Online]. Available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/16424145.pdf> (Accessed 18 October 2016).

Carr, D. (1995) 'Towards a Distinctive Conception of Spiritual Education', *Oxford Review of Education*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 83-98.

Charmaz, K. (2005) 'Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies.' In Denzin, N. and Lincoln, E. (eds.) (2013) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

The Children's Society (2016) The Good Childhood Report 2016 [Online]. Available at <http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/research/the-good-childhood-report> (Accessed 26 October 2016).

Christie, P. (2010) 'The complexity of human rights in global times', *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 3-11.

Claxton, G. (2012) *Building Learning Power*, Moorabbin, Vic., Hawker Brownlow Education.

Coatsworth, J., Duncan, L., Nix, R., Greenberg, M., Gayles, J., Bamberger, K., Berrena, E. and Demi, M. (2015) 'Integrating mindfulness with parent training', *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 51, no. 1, pp. 26-35.

- Coelho, P. (2006) *The Alchemist*, London, Harper.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2011) *Research Methods in Education*, London, Routledge.
- Coholic, D. A. (2011) 'Exploring the feasibility and benefits of arts-based mindfulness-based practices with young people in need.', *Child and Youth Care Forum*, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 303–317
- Collins, D. (1994) 'The Disempowering Logic of Empowerment', *Empowerment in Organizations*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 14-21.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2006) 'Sound, Presence, and Power: Student Voice in Educational Research and Reform.', *Curriculum Inquiry*, vol. 36 pp. 359-390.
- Costello, E. and Lawler, M. (2014) 'An Exploratory Study of the Effects of Mindfulness on Perceived Levels of Stress among school-children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds', *The International Journal of Emotional Education*, vol.6, no.2, pp. 21-39.
- Cotton, K. (2013) Developing Empathy in Children and Youth, [Online]. Available at <https://www.antelopespringscounseling.com/documents/articles/EmpathyChildrenYouth.pdf> (Accessed 12 November 2019).
- Cozolino, L. (2014) *The Neuroscience of Human Relationships*, London, Norton and Co.
- Cruchon, M. (2009) The Benefits of Integrating Mindfulness and Yoga in the Elementary Classroom [Online], ProQuest Dissertations. Available at <http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/976621/1/MR63087.pdf> (Accessed 16 October 2016).
- CUREE, 2009, Map of Research Reviews (QCA Building the Evidence Base Project): September 2007–March 2011, Coventry, CUREE.
- Daley, B. (2004) 'Using concept maps in qualitative research', *Concept Maps Theory*, vol.1, no. 19 pp. 191–9.
- Dantley, M. E., and Tillman, L. C. (2006). 'Social justice and moral transformative leadership', In C. Marshall and M. Oliva (Eds.), *Leadership for Social Justice: Making Revolutions in Education* pp. 16–30. Boston, Pearson Education.
- Davidson, R., Dunne, J., Eccles, J., Engle, A., Greenberg, M., Jennings, P., Jha, A., Jinpa, T., Lantieri, L., Meyer, D., Roeser, R. and Vago, D. (2012) 'Contemplative Practices and Mental Training: Prospects for American Education', *Child Development Perspectives*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 146-153.
- Dell'Angelo, T., Seaton, G. and Smith, N. (2012) 'Critical Theory in Education' in Pedersen, J. and Totten, S. (2014) *Educating about Social Issues in the 20th and 21st Centuries*, Charlotte, NC, Information Age Publications.
- Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2013) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Los Angeles, Sage Publications.
- Department for Education (2016) Mental health and behaviour in schools [Online]. Available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/508847/Mental\\_Health\\_and\\_Behaviour\\_-\\_advice\\_for\\_Schools\\_160316.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508847/Mental_Health_and_Behaviour_-_advice_for_Schools_160316.pdf) (Accessed 29 October 2016).
- De Souza, M. (2006) 'Spirituality in Education: Addressing the Inner and Outer Lives of Students', in De Souza, M. and Wing Han Lamb, W. (eds) (2007) *Spirituality in the lives of children and adolescents*, Adelaide, Australian Theological Forum.
- Dewey, J. (1896) 'The reflex arc concept in psychology', *Psychological Review*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 357-370.

- Dewey, J. (1922) *Human Nature and Conduct*, New York, Modern Library.
- Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*, New York, Kappa Delta Pi.
- Dix, P. (2017) *When the Adults Change, Everything Changes: Seismic Shifts in School Behaviour*, Independent Thinking Press.
- Dorjee, D. (2010) 'Kinds and Dimensions of Mindfulness: Why it is Important to Distinguish Them', *Mindfulness*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 152-160.
- Downey, G. (1991) 'Agency and Structure in Negotiating Knowledge' in Douglas, M. (ed.) *How Classification Works*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Univ. Press.
- Dweck, C. (2017) *Mindset*, London, Constable and Robinson.
- Dreyfus, G. (2011) 'Is mindfulness present-centred and non-judgmental? A discussion of the cognitive dimensions of mindfulness', *Contemporary Buddhism*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 41-54.
- Eaude, T. (2009) 'Happiness, emotional well-being and mental health' *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, vol.14, no.3, pp. 185-196.
- Ercikan, K. and Roth, W. (2006) 'What Good is Polarizing Research into Qualitative and Quantitative?', *Educational Researcher*, vol. 35, no. 5, pp. 14-23.
- Ergas, O. (2013) 'Mindfulness in education at the intersection of science, religion, and healing', *Critical Studies in Education*, vol. 55, no.1, pp. 58-72
- Ergas, O. (2014) 'The Deeper Teachings of Mindfulness-Based 'Interventions'', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 49, no.2, pp. 203-220.
- Ergas, O. (2015) 'Educating the Wandering Mind', *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 98-119.
- Ergas, O. (2019) 'Three Roles of Mindfulness in Education', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 53, no. 2, pp. 340-358.
- Ferguson, D. (2021) Home schooling: 'I'm a maths lecturer – and I had to get my children to teach me' *The Guardian*, 20<sup>th</sup> February [Online]. Available at <https://amp-theguardian-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/amp.theguardian.com/education/2021/feb/20/im-a-maths-lecturer-and-i-had-to-get-my-children-to-teach-me> (Accessed 24 February 2021).
- Fetterman, D. (2015) 'Empowerment Evaluation and Action Research' in Bradbury (ed) *The Sage Handbook of Action Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications.
- Fetterman, D. (2017) 'Transformative Empowerment Evaluation and Freirean Pedagogy: Alignment with an Emancipatory Tradition', *New Directions for Evaluation*, vol. 2017, no. 155, pp. 111-126.
- Feuerborn, L. and Guelnder, B. (2019) 'Mindfulness and Social-Emotional Competencies: Proposing Connections through a Review of the Research', *Mindfulness*, vol. 10, no. 9, pp. 1707-1720.
- Fielding, M. (2004) 'Transformative Approaches to Student Voice: Theoretical Underpinnings, Recalcitrant Realities', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 295-311.
- Flook, L., Goldberg, S. B., Pinger, L. and Davidson, R. J. (2015). 'Promoting prosocial behaviour and self-regulatory skills in preschool children through a mindfulness-based kindness curriculum.' *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 44–51.

Flook, L. and Pinger, L. (2017) Lessons from Creating a Kindness Curriculum, *Centerhealthyminds.org*, [Online]. Available at <https://centerhealthyminds.org/join-the-movement/lessons-from-creating-a-kindness-curriculum> (Accessed 1 April 2020).

Flores, N. (2015) Here's why you need to question mindfulness in classrooms. *The Huffington Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> September, [Online] Available at [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/natalie-flores/heres-why-you-need-to-question-mindfulness\\_b\\_8112090.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/natalie-flores/heres-why-you-need-to-question-mindfulness_b_8112090.html) (Accessed 16 October 2016).

Floyd, A. and Arthur, L. (2012) 'Researching from within: external and internal ethical engagement', *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 171-180.

Forbes, D. (2019) *Mindfulness and Its Discontents: Education, Self, and Social Transformation*, New York, Fernwood Publishing Co., Ltd.

Forbes, D. (2018) Critical Integral Contemplative Education, *Academia.edu*, [Online] Available from: [https://www.academia.edu/30431857/Forbes\\_Critical\\_Integral\\_Contemplative\\_Education.docx](https://www.academia.edu/30431857/Forbes_Critical_Integral_Contemplative_Education.docx) (Accessed 2 November 2017).

Foucault, M. (1980) *Power Knowledge*, Harlow, Longman.

Foucault, M. (1998) *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*, London, Penguin.

Freire, P. (1968) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, New York, Seabury Press.

Freire, P. (1970) 'The banking model in education' in Provenzo, E. (ed.) (2006) *Critical Issues in Education*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Freire, P. (1974) *Education for Critical Consciousness*, New York, Continuum.

Fullan, M. (2015) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, New York, Teachers College Press.

Gajanan, M. (2016) Parents get 'namaste' banned from yoga lessons at Georgia elementary school, *The Guardian*, 25<sup>th</sup> March, [Online]. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/25/georgia-school-bans-namaste-yoga-religion-cobb-county> (Accessed 19 February 2020).

Gee, J. (2018) Mental health statistics in the UK, *The Children's Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, [Online]. Available at <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/our-blog/mental-health-statistics> (Accessed 15 March 2020).

Gerszberg, C. (2017) Bringing Mindfulness into Schools, *Mindful*, 25<sup>th</sup> January, [Online]. Available at <https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-in-education/> (Accessed 8 April 2020).

Gibb N. (2015) 'How ED Hirsh came to shape the UK government policy' in Simons A. and Porter. N. (eds.) (2015) *Knowledge and the Curriculum, A collection of essays to accompany E. D. Hirsch's lecture at Policy Exchange*, London, Policy Exchange.

Glicken, M. (2003) *Social Research*, Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

Goalen, S. (2013) An exploration of a mindfulness intervention with 7 and 8-year-old children, Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, University of Manchester.

Greenberg, M. T. and Harris, A. R. (2011) 'Nurturing Mindfulness in Children and Youth: Current state of research', *Child Development Perspectives*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 161-166.

Griffiths, M. and Davies, C. (1995) *In Fairness to Children*, London, David Fulton.

- Griffiths, M. (1998) *Educational Research for Social Justice*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (1994) 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research' in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, S. (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (2005). 'Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences.' In N. K. Denzin, N. and Lincoln, S. (eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, London, Sage Publications.
- Habermas, J. (1970) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, London, Heinemann.
- Habermas, J. (1987) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Cambridge, England, Polity Press.
- Hackett, C. and McClendon, D. (2017) World's largest religion by population is still Christianity, *Pew Research Centre*, 5<sup>th</sup> April, [Online]. Available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/> (Accessed 21 February 2020).
- Halliwell, E. (2020) Buddhism in education | Ed Halliwell, *The Guardian*, 9<sup>th</sup> July, [Online]. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/jul/09/buddhism-schools> (Accessed 21 February 2020).
- Hammersley, M. (2012) Methodological Paradigms in Educational Research, *Bera.ac.uk*, [online] Available from: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/methodological-paradigms-in-educational-research> (Accessed 4 December 2017).
- Hanberger, A. (2006) Evaluation of and for Democracy, *Evaluation*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 17-37.
- Harvey, N. (2017) *Silly Limbic: A Tail of Bravery*, London, Amazon.
- Harvey, N. (2019) *Silly Limbic: A Tail of Calm*, London, Amazon.
- Hay, D. and Nye, R. (2006) *The Spirit of the Child*, London, Fount.
- Health and Safety Executive (2019) Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain 2019, [Online]. Available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf> (Accessed 17 February 2020).
- Hellawell, D. (2006) 'Inside-out: analysis of the insider-outsider concept as a heuristic device to develop reflexivity in students doing qualitative research', *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 484-494
- Hirsh, E.D. (1987) *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*, Boston, Houghton.
- Holland, D. (2004) 'Integrating Mindfulness Meditation and Somatic Awareness into a Public Educational Setting', *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 468-484.
- House, E. and Howe, K. (1999) *Values in Evaluation and Social Research*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Hutchings, M. (2015) The impact of accountability measures on children and young people exam factories? [Online]. Available at [https://www.teachers.org.uk/sites/default/files2014/exam-factories\\_0.pdf](https://www.teachers.org.uk/sites/default/files2014/exam-factories_0.pdf) (Accessed 16 October 2016).
- Hunter, I. (1994) *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism*, New York, St. Martin's Press.
- Hyde, A. and LaPrad, J. (2015) 'Mindfulness, Democracy and Education', *Democracy and Education*, vol. 23, no. 2.
- Hyett, N., Kenny, A. and Dickson-Swift, V. (2014) 'Methodology or method? A critical review of qualitative case study reports', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, vol. 9, no. 1.

- Hyland, T. (2013) 'Buddhist practice and educational endeavour: in search of a secular spirituality for state-funded education in England', *Ethics and Education*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 241-252.
- Hyland, T. (2015) 'On the Contemporary Applications of Mindfulness: Some Implications for Education', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 49, no.2, pp. 170-186.
- Hyland, T. (2016) 'Mindful Nation UK – Report by the Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group (MAPPG)', *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, vol. 68, no.1, pp. 133-136.
- Hyland, T. (2017) 'McDonaldizing Spirituality: Mindfulness, Education and Consumerism', *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol.15, no. 4, pp. 334-356.
- Ingram, D. and Simon-Ingram, J., eds. (1991) *Critical Theory: the essential readings*, New York, Paragon.
- Jackson, A. (2013) 'Spaces of Power/Knowledge', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 19, no. 10, pp. 839-847.
- James, M. & Pollard, A. (2011) 'TLRP's ten principles for effective pedagogy: rationale, development, evidence, argument and impact', *Research Papers in Education*, vol.26, no.33, pp. 275-328.
- Jarvis, P. (2021) Learning in the time of COVID-19 and beyond: a reflection, *Yorkshire Bylines*, 19<sup>th</sup> January [Online]. Available at <https://yorkshirebylines.co.uk/author/pamjarvis/> (Accessed 24 February 2021).
- Jennings, P. and Greenberg, M. (2009) 'The Prosocial Classroom: Teacher Social and Emotional Competence in Relation to Student and Classroom Outcomes', *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 79, no. 1, pp. 491-525.
- Jennings, P., Frank, J., Snowberg, K., Coccia, M. and Greenberg, M. (2013) 'Improving classroom learning environments by cultivating awareness and resilience in education', *School Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 374-390.
- Jones, C. and Tannock, J. (2002) 'A matter of life and death: a reflective account of two examples of practitioner research into children's understanding and experience of death and bereavement' in Lewis, A. and Lindsay, G.(eds.) *Researching Children's Perspectives*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Jones, D. (2011) Mindfulness in schools, *The Psychologist*, October, [Online] Available at <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-24/edition-10/mindfulness-schools> (Accessed 1 June 2017).
- Justmeans (2020) Eagle Rock School Recognized for Innovative Approach, *Just Means* [Online]. Available at <http://justmeans.com/article/eagle-rock-school-recognized-for-innovative-approach> (Accessed 25 February 2020).
- Kabat-Zinn, J. Massion, A. Kristeller, J. Peterson, L. Fletcher, K. Pbert, L. Lenderking, W. Santorelli, S. (1992) 'Effectiveness of a meditation-based stress reduction programme in the treatment of anxiety disorders', *AMJ Psychiatry*, vol. 149, no. 7, pp 936-43
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005) *Coming to Our Senses*, New York, Hyperion.
- Kaufman, P. (2017) 'Critical Contemplative Pedagogy', *Radical Pedagogy*, vol. 14, no. 1.
- Keating, N. (2016) 'Children's Spirituality and the Practice of Meditation in Irish Primary Schools', *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp 49-71.
- Kellner, D. (2003) 'Toward a Critical Theory of Education', *Democracy and Nature*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 51-64.
- Kelly, D. and Brandes, G. (2001) 'Shifting out of "Neutral": Beginning Teachers' Struggles with Teaching for Social Justice', *Canadian Journal of Education*, vol. 26, no. 4, p. 437.

Kelly, D. and Brooks, M. (2009) 'How Young is Too Young? Exploring Beginning Teachers' Assumptions about Young Children and Teaching for Social Justice', *Equity and Excellence in Education*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 202-216.

Kelly, M. (2019) 7 Core Purposes for Education, *Thoughtco*, 7<sup>th</sup> July, [Online]. Available at <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-the-aim-of-education-8417> (Accessed 30 March 2020).

Kessler, S. (2015) *The 5 Personality Patterns*, Richmond, California, Bodhi Tree Press.

Kincheloe, J. and McLaren, P. (1994) 'Rethinking critical theory and quantitative research', in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, S. (eds.) (1994) *Handbook of qualitative research*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Kinchin, I., Streatfield, D. and Hay, D. (2010) 'Using Concept Mapping to Enhance the Research Interview', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 52-68.

King, V., Payne, V., Harper, P. and Aires, C. (2018) *50 Ways to Feel Happy*, London, QED Publishing.

Klenberg, L., Korkman, M., and Lahti-Nuuttila, P. (2001) 'Differential development of attention and executive functions in 3to-12-year-old Finnish children', *Developmental Neuropsychology*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 407-428.

Kushner, S. (2014a) 'Why We Should Focus on Understanding the Individual in Evaluation', *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 4-11.

Kushner, S. (2014b) 'Democratic Evaluation and Equity Focused Evaluation: Cousins but not Siblings', *Evaluations Connections the European Evaluation Society Newsletter*.

Kushner, S. (2017) *Evaluative Research Methods*, Charlotte, NC, Information Age Publishing.

Kuyken, W., Nuthall, E., Byford, S., Crane, C., Dalgleish, T., Ford, T., Greenberg, M., Ukoumunne, O., Viner, R. and Williams, J. (2017) 'The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a mindfulness training programme in schools compared with normal school provision (MYRIAD): study protocol for a randomised controlled trial', *Trials*, vol. 18, no. 1.

Lantieri, L. and Zakrzewski, V. (2015) How SEL and Mindfulness Can Work Together, *Greater Good*, 7<sup>th</sup> April, [Online]. Available at [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_social\\_emotional\\_learning\\_and\\_mindfulness\\_can\\_work\\_together](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_social_emotional_learning_and_mindfulness_can_work_together) (Accessed 5 January 2020).

Lash, J. (1980) *Helen and Teacher: The Story of Helen Keller and Ann Sullivan Macy*, New York, Deutsch.

Leonard, M. (2019) *Social Mindfulness*, London, Mindfulness Connected Ltd.

Lemon, L. (2017) Applying a Mindfulness Practice to Qualitative Data Collection, *The Qualitative Report*, [Online]. Available at [https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss12/14/?utm\\_source=nsuworks.nova.edu%2Ftqr%2Fvol22%2Fiss12%2F14&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverSheet](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss12/14/?utm_source=nsuworks.nova.edu%2Ftqr%2Fvol22%2Fiss12%2F14&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverSheet) (Accessed 17 January 2019).

Lipton, B. (2005) *The Biology of Belief*, London, Hay House.

Macbeth, S. (2018) Reflective Practice-Participatory Methods, *Participatory Methods*, [Online]. Available at <http://www.participatorymethods.org/method/reflective-practice> (Accessed 2 April 2018).

MacDonald, B. (1976) 'Evaluation and the control of education' in Tawney D. (ed.) (1976) *Curriculum evaluation today: trends and implications*, London, MacMillan Education.

Mack, L. (2010) The Philosophical Underpinnings of Educational Research, *Polyglossia*, [Online] Available from: [http://en.apu.ac.jp/rcaps/uploads/fckeditor/publications/polyglossia/Polyglossia\\_V19\\_Lindsay.pdf](http://en.apu.ac.jp/rcaps/uploads/fckeditor/publications/polyglossia/Polyglossia_V19_Lindsay.pdf) (Accessed 25 March 2017).

Mackenzie, N. and Knipe, S. (2006) 'Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology', *Issues in Educational Research*, vol. 16 no. 2, pp 193-205.

MacLean, K. (2004) *Peaceful Piggy Meditation*, China, Albert Whitman and Company.

Magee R.V. (2016) 'Community-Engaged Mindfulness and Social Justice: An Inquiry and Call to Action', In: Purser R., Forbes D., Burke A. (eds) *Handbook of Mindfulness*, Cham, Springer International Publishing.

MAPPG (2015) The Mindful Nation UK Report, *The Mindfulness All Party Parliamentary Group* [Online]. Available at [http://www.oxfordmindfulness.org/wp-content/uploads/mindfulness-appg-report\\_mindful-nation-uk\\_oct2015-002.pdf](http://www.oxfordmindfulness.org/wp-content/uploads/mindfulness-appg-report_mindful-nation-uk_oct2015-002.pdf) (Accessed 9 November 2016).

Marlow, M. and Austin, V. (2016) 'Mindfulness for Students Classified with Emotional/Behavioural Disorder', *Insights into Learning Disabilities*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 81-94.

Marshall, C. and Oliva, M. (2010) *Leadership for Social Justice*, Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

Maynard, K. (2017) Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Improving Cognition, Academic Achievement, Behaviour, and Socioemotional Functioning of Primary and Secondary School Students. *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 2017:5., [Online]. Available at <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED573474> (Accessed 25 February 2017).

McCabe, M., Costello, S. and Roodenburg, J. (2017) 'The Child's Voice in Determining Program Acceptability for a School-Based Mindfulness Intervention', *Social Sciences*, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 155.

McCown, D., Kabat-Zinn, J., Micozzi, M. and Reibel, D. (2011) *Teaching Mindfulness*, New York, Springer.

Meadows, D. (2008) *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*, White River Junction, VT, Chelsea Green.

Meiklejohn, J., Phillips, C., Freedman, M., Griffin, M., Biegel, G., Roach, A., Frank, J., Burke, C., Pinger, L., Soloway, G., Isberg, R., Sibinga, E., Grossman, L. and Saltzman, A. (2012) 'Integrating Mindfulness Training into K-12 Education', *Mindfulness*, vol.3, no.4, pp. 291-307.

Merriam, S. (2009) *Qualitative research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D. (2007) 'Transformative Paradigm: Mixed Methods and Social Justice', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 212-225.

Mertens, D. (2014) *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology*, Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis. An Expanded Sourcebook*, London, Sage.

Miller, R. and Brewer, J. (2003) *The A-Z of Social Research*, London, Sage Publications.

MindBe (2020) Preschool Mindfulness Curriculum, *Mindbe.org*, [Online]. Available at <https://mindbe.org/launch-pagemarch202036415711> (Accessed 14 April 2020).

MiSP (2015) Paws b Teaching Materials, *Mindfulness in Schools Project*, [Online] Available from: <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/members/paws-b/> (Accessed 4 August 2017).

MiSP (2020) About MiSP, *Mindfulness in Schools Project*, [Online]. Available at <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/about/> (Accessed 15 March 2020).

Monteiro, L. (2017) 'The Moral Arc of Mindfulness: Cultivating Concentration, Wisdom, and Compassion', *Mindfulness in Behavioural Health*, pp. 143-162.

Myers, D. (2004) *Intuition*, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press.

Nhất Hạnh, T. (2010) *A Pebble for Your Pocket*, Westfield, N.J., Plum Blossom.



- Nhất Hạnh, T and Vriezen, W. (2008) *Mindful Movement*, Berkeley, Parallax Press.
- Nhất Hạnh, T. and Weare, K. (2017) *Happy Teachers Change the World: A Guide for Cultivating Mindfulness in Education*, Berkeley, California, Parallax Press.
- NHS Digital (2018) Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2017, *NHS Digital*, [Online]. Available at <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2017/2017> (Accessed 7 March 2020).
- Nichols, R. and Allen-Brown, V. (1996) 'Critical theory and Educational Technology' in Jonassen, D.(ed.) (1996) *Handbook for Research for Educational Communications and Technology*, London, Sage Publications.
- Niebuhr, R. (1934) Serenity Prayer, *Beliefnet.com*, [Online]. Available at <https://www.beliefnet.com/prayers/protestant/addiction/serenity-prayer.aspx> (Accessed 21 October 2020).
- Niemi, R., Heikkinen, H. and Kannas, L. (2010) 'Polyphony in the Classroom: Reporting Narrative Action Research reflexively', *Educational Action Research*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 137-149.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2011) 'Social Justice in Education Today', *Acta Academia*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 189-209.
- Nickerson, R. S. (1998) 'Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises', *Review of General Psychology*, vol. 2, pp. 175–220.
- Nisbet, J. and Watt, J. (1984) 'Case Study' in Bell, J., Bush, T., Fox, A., Goodey, J. and Goulding, S. *Conducting Small Scale Investigations in Educational Management*, London, Harper and Row.
- nsw.gov.au. (2015) NSW Department of Education and Communities Wellbeing Framework for Schools, [Online]. Available at [https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/about/16531\\_Wellbeing-Framework-for-schools\\_Accessible.pdf](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/about/16531_Wellbeing-Framework-for-schools_Accessible.pdf) (Accessed 20 February 2020).
- O'Neil, R. (2006) Analyse This!!! - qualitative data introduction, [Online]. Available at <http://archive.learnhigher.ac.uk/analysethis/main/qualitative.html> (Accessed 27 March 2018).
- Osterling, J. (2005) Democracy, Equity and Social Justice, Lecture.
- Oxford Mindfulness Centre (2016) Mindfulness and Resilience in Adolescence (MYRIAD) Project, [Online]. Available at <https://oxfordmindfulness.org/news/mindfulness-resilience-adolescence-myriad-project/> (Accessed 17 February 2020).
- Palmer, S. (2007) *Toxic Childhood*, London, Orion.
- Pascal, C. and Bertram, T. (2009) 'Listening to young citizens: the struggle to make real a participatory paradigm in research with young children', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 249-262.
- Pearce, S. (2016) Authentic Learning, what why and how? [Online]. Available at [http://www.acer.org.au/acer/ACEL\\_docs/Publications/e-Teaching/2016/e-Teaching\\_2016\\_10.pdf](http://www.acer.org.au/acer/ACEL_docs/Publications/e-Teaching/2016/e-Teaching_2016_10.pdf) (Accessed 25 November 2019).
- Peters, S. (2018) *My Hidden Chimp*, London, Studio Press.
- Piotrowski, S., Binder, M. and Krmpotić Schwind, J. (2017) 'Primary Teachers' Perceptions of Mindfulness Practices with Young Children', *Learning Landscapes*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 225-240.
- Postman, N. (2011) *The Disappearance of Childhood*, New York, Vintage Books.

Puntambekar, S. and Kolodner, J. (2005) 'Toward implementing distributed scaffolding: Helping students learn science from design', *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 185-217.

Purser, R. and Loy, D. (2013) Beyond McMindfulness, *The Huffington Post*, 31<sup>st</sup> August, [Online] Available from: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ron-purser/beyond-mcmindfulness\\_b\\_3519289.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ron-purser/beyond-mcmindfulness_b_3519289.html) (Accessed 5 June 2017)

Purser, R. (2019) *Mcmindfulness: How Mindfulness Became the New Capitalist Spirituality*, London, Repeater Books.

Rau, H. and Williams, P. (2016) 'Dispositional mindfulness: A critical review of construct validation research', *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 93, pp. 32-43.

Reveley, J. (2015) 'School-Based Mindfulness Training and the Economisation of Attention', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 47, no. 8, pp. 804-821.

Rienstra, B. and Hook, D. (2006) 'Weakening Habermas: The Undoing of Communicative Rationality', *Politikon*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 313-339.

Rix, G. and Bernay, R. (2014) 'A Study of the Effects of Mindfulness in Five Primary Schools in New Zealand', *Teachers' Work*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 201-220.

Roberts, L. (2004) *Breathe, Chill*, Milton Keynes, Lightening Source UK Ltd.

Rogers, S. (2017) A Mindfulness Practice for Pre-schoolers That Connects Kids to Nature, *Mindful*, 11<sup>th</sup> November, [Online]. Available at <https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-practice-preschoolers-connects-kids-nature/> (Accessed 8 April 2020).

Rossmann, G. and Rallis, S. (2010) 'Everyday Ethics: Reflections on Practice' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 379-391.

Roth, J. (1996) 'Book Review- In Fairness to Children', *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 475-476.  
Rutstein, J. (2019) How to Enhance Connection, Happiness and Ease: The Neuroscience of Self-Regulation, *The Brain Change Summit*, [Online]. Available at <https://thecreativemind.info/Brain-Change-Summit> (Accessed 22 April 2019).

Sahlberg, P. (2012) Global Educational Reform Movement is here, *Pasisahlberg.com*, [Online] Available from: <https://pasisahlberg.com/global-educational-reform-movement-is-here/> (Accessed 18 February 2018).

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012) *Research methods for business students*, Harlow, Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Schonert-Reichl, K. (2017) 'Social and Emotional Learning and Teachers', *The Future of Children*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 137-155.

Seligman, M. (2002) *Authentic Happiness*, London, Nicholas Brealey.

Shapiro, S. and Carlson, L. (2009) *The Art and Science of Mindfulness, Integrating Mindfulness into Psychology and The Helping Professions*, New York, American Psychological Association.

Simon, T. (2008). *Measuring the Immeasurable*, Boulder, Sounds True Inc.

Simpson, D. (2017) 'From Me to We: Revolutionising Mindfulness in Schools', *Contemporary Buddhism*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 47-71.

Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Siraj-Blatchford, J. (1997) 'Reflexivity, Social Justice and Educational Research', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 235-248.

- Smith, H. (1991) *Strategies of Social Research*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Smith, S. E. (2010) To be wise and kind: A Buddhist Community Engagement with Victorian State Primary Schools, [Online]. Available at [http://vuir.vu.edu.au/15538/1/sue\\_smith\\_thesis.pdf](http://vuir.vu.edu.au/15538/1/sue_smith_thesis.pdf) (Accessed 16 November 2016).
- Smith, E. (2012) *Key Issues in Education and Social Justice*, London, SAGE Publications.
- Smyth, J. (2012) 'Doing Research on Student Voice in Australia', *Management in Education*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 153-154.
- Soka Gakkai International SGI (2017) The Nine Consciousnesses, [Online] Available from: <http://www.sgi.org/about-us/buddhism-in-daily-life/the-nine-consciousnesses.html> (Accessed 29 May 2017).
- Solace Asia (2016) Is Mindfulness a Religious or Spiritual Practice? *Solaceasia.Org*, [Online]. Available at <https://www.solaceasia.org/blog/is-mindfulness-a-religious-or-spiritual-practice> (Accessed 17 June 2020).
- Stefanino, O. (2007) *Be Your Own Guru*, Chichester, Capstone Publishing Ltd.
- Tan, S. (2013) Understanding the Structure and Agency Debate in Social Sciences, *Habitus Vol. 1, The Forum*, [Online]. Available at [https://issuu.com/yalehabitus/docs/habitus\\_final](https://issuu.com/yalehabitus/docs/habitus_final) (Accessed 5 January 2019).
- Tang, Y., Hölzel, B. and Posner, M. (2015) 'The Neuroscience of Mindfulness Meditation', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 213-225.
- Tangen, R. 2008. 'Listening to Children's Voices in Educational Research ', *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 157-66.
- Taylor, P. and Medina, M. (2013) 'Educational Research Paradigms', *International Journal of Meaning Centred Education*.
- Thomas, G. and Atkinson, C. (2017) 'Perspectives on a whole class mindfulness programme', *Educational Psychology in Practice*, vol.33, no.3, pp. 231-248.
- Tomasulo, D. (2020) Dispositional Mindfulness: Noticing What You Notice, *World of Psychology*, [Online]. Available at <https://psychcentral.com/blog/dispositional-mindfulness-noticing-what-you-notice/> (Accessed 27 February 2020).
- Tracy, S. (2010) 'Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 16, no. 10, pp. 837-851.
- Tugend, A. (2012) *Better by Mistake*, New York, Riverhead Books.
- Van Doesum, N., Van Lange, D. and Van Lange, P. (2013) 'Social mindfulness: Skill and will to navigate the social world', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 105, no. 1, pp. 86-103.
- Verhaeghe, P. (2014) *What About Me? The Struggle for Identity in a Market-Based Society*, Victoria, Australia, Scribe.
- Vickery, C. E. and Dorjee, D. (2015) Mindfulness Training in Primary Schools Decreases Negative Affect and Increases Meta-Cognition in Children, *Frontiers in Psychology*, [Online]. Available at <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.02025/full> (Accessed 28 March 2016).
- Vita, Á. (2014) 'Critical Theory and Social Justice, *Brazilian Political Science Review*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 109-126.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in Society*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

- Wallis, G. (2014) Criticism Matters: A Response to Rick Repetti, *Academia.edu*, [Online]. Available at [https://www.academia.edu/35379757/Criticism\\_Matters\\_A\\_Response\\_to\\_Rick\\_Repetti](https://www.academia.edu/35379757/Criticism_Matters_A_Response_to_Rick_Repetti) (Accessed 6 December 2017).
- Walsh, Z. (2016) Critical Theory and the Contemporary Discourse on Mindfulness, *The Journal of the Association of Buddhist Universities*, [Online]. Available at <http://www.ojs.mcu.ac.th/index.php/jiabu/article/view/962> (Accessed 14 December 2017).
- Warin, J. (2011) 'Ethical Mindfulness and Reflexivity', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 17, no. 9, pp. 805-814.
- Weare, K. (2013) Evidence for the impact of Mindfulness on children and young people, *Mindfulness in Schools Project* [Online]. Available at <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/MiSP-Research-Summary-2012.pdf> (Accessed 1 May 2016).
- Weare, K. (2014) Impacts on the Wellbeing and Performance of School Staff, *Mindfulness in Schools Project* [Online]. Available at <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Evidence-for-Mindfulness-Impact-on-school-staff.pdf> (Accessed 9 April 2020).
- Weare, K. (2020) Mindfulness- the Trojan mole of education, paper presented at Mindfulness in Schools Conference, [Online], 20<sup>th</sup> June
- Wheeldon, J. and Faubert, J. (2009) 'Framing Experience: Concept Maps, Mind Maps, and Data Collection in Qualitative Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 68-83.
- Willard, C. (2010) *Child's Mind*, Berkeley, Calif., Parallax Press.
- Williams, M., Teesdale, J. and Segal, Z. (2002). *The Mindful Way through Depression*, New York, Guilford Publications.
- Williams, J. and Hill, P. (2012) *A Handbook for the Assessment of Children's Behaviours*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell.
- Williams, M. and Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013) *Mindfulness*, London, England, Routledge.
- Wright, A. (2000) *Spirituality and Education*, London, Routledge/Falmer.
- Wolstenholme, C., Willis, B. and Culliney, M. (2016) Evaluation of the Impact of Jigsaw the Mindful Approach to PSHE on Primary Schools, *Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive*, [Online]. Available at <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/13692/> (Accessed 27 February 2020).
- Wood, D., Bruner, J. and Ross, G. (1976) 'The Role of Tutoring in Problem Solving', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 89-100.
- Yin, R. (2009). *Case Study Methods: Design and Methods*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Young Citizens (2020) SMSC - Ofsted Definition of SMSC Education, *SMSC National Quality Mark*, [Online]. Available at <https://www.smscqualitymark.org.uk/what-is-smsc/> (Accessed 21 February 2020).
- Zhou, J. (2012) 'Problems Teachers Face When Doing Action Research and Finding Possible Solutions', *Chinese Education and Society*, vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 68-80.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Qualitative Studies in Primary Schools

Adult and Child Perspective Studies	Campion and Rocco (2009)  Consultant Psychiatrist and Education Lecturer	Carelse (2013)  Educational Psychologist	Goalen (2013)  Educational Psychologist
Location	Australia Catholic Schools	London	Manchester
Participants	3 schools 54 students 7-12 years 19 teachers 7 parents	1 class teacher 6 children 9-10 years	One class for intervention One class as a control 2 teachers 6 children in group interview 7-8 years
Length/Type of Programme	1 year meditation programme	Researcher own programme 5 weeks 2 weekly sessions	Cattley and Lavelle (2009) adapted secondary programme with additional activities 8 weeks
Methods	Individual and group interviews at the end of the programme.	Children interviewed before and after. Also asked to record their experiences in words and pictures after each session. Teacher interview towards the end of the programme.	Mixed method design Pre, post-test questionnaires Researcher diary Teacher facilitator diary Teacher interviews Children group interview post programme
Reported Results	Increased relaxation Reduced stress Reduced anger Improved concentration Decision-making free of conditioning	Seen to improve attention, wellbeing and social competence as an intervention strategy	Manageable for teacher EP and teacher collaboration Increased-self regulation and wellbeing for children Inconclusive for increasing attention and impacting on cognitive processing
Significant Findings	Almost half of pupils reported using meditation outside of school.  Feedback not unequivocally positive	This research was planned to explore children's experiences of learning mindfulness to develop attention. Children were identified as having mild attention deficit disorders.  Researcher did keep a research journal but only in the pilot study for researcher reflexivity.	Mixture of school mindfulness packages  Teacher beginning to use activities as a tool for children to self-regulate  Diaries aided triangulation but did not provide raw data

Adult and Child Perspective Studies	Costello and Lawler (2014)  Educational Disadvantage Centre- St Patricks College	Bernay et al. (2016)  University of Auckland	Thomas and Atkinson (2017)  Bright Futures Education Trust University of Manchester
Location	Dublin- lower socio economic background	New Zealand	North West England
Participants	Interviews with 16 children and 2 teachers  63 children given self-reflective journals 11-12 years old	124 children from 3 schools completed self-rated scales 6 children 3 teachers interviewed 9-12 years old	Thomas was the link educational psychologist 1 school 3 class teachers 1 mindfulness teacher 16 children in 4 focus groups random sampling used 8-9 years old
Length/Type of Programme	5-week school based programme Daily mindfulness practices delivered by the class teacher from recordings and scripts	Developed by the Mental Health Foundation of NZ delivered by visiting trained mindfulness facilitator 1 hour lessons 8 weeks	<b>*MISP Paws b programme</b> 1 hour lessons 6 weeks
Methods	Mixed method design Interviews post programme and pupil daily journals.	Mixed methods design Self-rated scales Teacher journals completed fortnightly Pupil and teacher interviews post programme	Post programme pupil focus groups and teacher interviews
Reported Results	Quantitative measures show perceived stress levels reduced Qualitative results showed increased awareness, self-regulation and improved classroom relations	Interviews showed increased understanding of mindfulness, social and emotional benefits and how they applied the practices outside the lessons Teachers noted changes in student behaviour, feasibility and high engagement from pupils	Majority of pupils enjoyed the lessons, deemed accessible and feasible for teachers Positive impact on pupil attention, meta cognition and social/emotional skills both within and beyond the classroom.
Significant Findings	Some pupils reported increased stress and some sadness  Limitations- findings cannot be generalised as participants chosen were at risk of exclusion	Pupil perspectives now included- change made from pilot study  Quantitative results may lead to short term improvements in children's well-being  Qualitative data showed increased well-being through strengthened social and emotional skills.	Themes used were programme format (enjoyable, novel, accessible, feasible)  classroom applications (attention, meta-cognition, self-regulation, relaxation, relationships)  wider implications (adaption, general anxiety, lifelong learning, school community)  Future improvements included a greater number of shorter lessons, greater variety of longer mindfulness exercises and differentiation including pre-teaching and small group work.  Evaluative element to programme

Teacher Perspective Studies	Rix and Bernay (2014) NZ Mental Health Foundation  Auckland University of Technology	Albrecht (2016) Mind Body Wellness co-ordinator  RMIT University researcher and	Piotrowski, Bindor and Schwind (2017)  Ryerson University
Location	New Zealand	Australia	Canada
Participants	5 primary schools  6 teacher perspectives  6-11 years  Mental Health Foundation of NZ delivered the programme.	8 teachers from Australia and USA	4 teachers teaching classes from aged 5 - 11  All members of holistic networks
Length/Type of Programme	Researcher developed mindfulness programme Maori model of holistic wellbeing  8 weeks	Participants talked about their own experiences and using multiple resources	Participants talked about their own varied experiences of incorporating mindfulness. No programmes used.
Methods	Fortnightly teacher journals-prompts given to support writing  Follow up survey 3 months later to assess potential long term effects	90 minute interview face to face, via Skype, phone, email or a combination of methods	Each participant attended an interview in their place of work
Reported Results	Programme may increase calm, reduce stress and improve focus and awareness. Results also indicated enhanced self-awareness and the development of positive relationships	Themes included spirituality including connection, creativity, responsibility for nurturing children's wellbeing, being a mindful role model	Themes included teachers motivating factors, perceived benefits and challenges faced.  A variety of holistic, creative approaches with emphasis on loving-kindness meditations
Significant Findings	Physical health, spiritual health, family health and mental health all seen as connected in Maori model  Teachers noted children applying skills to everyday situations and participating in home practice.  Themes included student engagement and sense of calm, ability to pay attention, compassion towards self and others, stress reduction for teachers through their own engagement. Evaluative element to programme	Research investigated how teachers who are Mind Body Wellness practitioners make sense of teaching children mindfulness to find common themes	Motivating factors include teacher stress and personal interests in Buddhism and yoga Mindfulness incorporated into daily routines, art activities, singing, mantras and breathing Challenges include no management support or collaboration, large class sizes and time pressures.

Child Perspective Studies	Cain (2012)  Counselling Psychologist	Ager, Albrecht and Cohen (2015)  RMIT University Melbourne	Bannirchelvam, Bell and Costello (2017)  Monash University Faculty of Education Melbourne
Location	North London	Auckland, New Zealand	Melbourne, Australia
Participants	1 school 19 children 9-10 years  Researcher delivered programme	2 schools 38 children 18 pupils aged 6-7 years and 20 pupils aged 9-10 years  The school's counsellor delivered the programme.	1 school 20 children selected by teachers as having high anxiety 8 children randomly selected for study 7-11 years
Length/Type of Programme	Researcher own programme 10 minute meditations 9 consecutive days	Meditation Capsules programme designed to suit ages from four to 18 years. The program, CD and book cater for teachers that have no experience 10 week course	Triple R (Robust, Resilient, Ready to Go) programme with 2 external facilitators 1 hour lessons 8 weeks
Methods	Group sharing after each meditation 11 individual interviews and 2 group interviews after programme	Student journals recorded through the 10 weeks. Journal designed by Albrecht included illustrating/writing about thoughts and feelings, how others are feeling, representing bodily feelings and when mindfulness activities would be helpful.	Post programme pupil interviews
Reported Results	Perceived experiential features Perceived benefits- positive and fun Perceived wider effects- improved behaviour	Student perspectives of their wellbeing (awareness, happiness, calmness, stress and anger management, creative wellness and flow) Student mindful engagement (heightened awareness of self, others, mindful word choices, environment) Conflict resolution strategies (siblings, friendships)	Student experiences – most enjoyed and found it useful, some found it boring. Active participation preferred to the facilitators explanations. Also enjoyed sharing their feelings and fears Motivation- emotional control, awareness of negative emotions, worry, coping strategies How they practised mindfulness – breathing, shifting attention
Significant Findings	Research journal included for researcher reflexivity  Researcher sees implications for clinical and education purposes	Introduces Wellness conceptual framework for school based mindfulness programmes (Albrecht, 2014)  A small number of children initially resisted activities finding them boring but gradually became more engaged in lessons.	Some children thought that mindfulness was a distraction from negative feelings rather than de-centring. Some had prior experiences of mindfulness and were prone to call this programme boring.



Child Perspective Studies	McCabe, Costello and Roodenburg (2017)  Monash University Faculty of Education Melbourne	Keating (2016)  National co-ordinator World Community for Christian Meditation Carlow, Ireland
Location	Melbourne, Australia	Ireland
Participants	96 children 30 children randomly selected 9-12 years  Researcher delivered programme	3 schools  48 children 7-11 years old
Length/Type of Programme	Triple R (Robust, Resilient, Ready to Go) programme  1 hour lessons 8 weeks	Meditation and Spirituality focus  2 schools- 2 years Christian meditation 1 school- 8 years whole school meditation
Methods	Post programme pupil interviews	1 <sup>st</sup> interview- Photo elicitation for metaphorical descriptions of experiences and perceived benefits. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Interview- Selection box of statements to stimulate discussion
Reported Results	Student experiences- fun and interesting. Enjoyed games and group activities and learning to understand thoughts and feelings. Group divided on whether they liked the audio meditations They enjoyed feeling relaxed, calm and good.	Pupil experiences- simplicity, serenity, self-awareness, attentive self-presence, heart awareness to divine presence Perceived practical benefits of meditation- improves decision making, generates energy and confidence, calms and restores Perceived spiritual benefits- deepen self-awareness, awakens the heart, nourishes the spirit, inspire authentic living in a recurring dynamic.
Significant Findings	Some children felt stigmatised by being chosen for the group.  Importance of using culturally appropriate materials  Evaluative element to programme	Although this is a study of spirituality there are interesting similarities with results and other school mindfulness research. There are also interesting methods used here.  Themes have also been depicted as the roots of a tree, practical benefits the leaves on the left and spiritual benefits the fruits on the right, corresponding to left and right hemispheres of the brain.

## **Appendix 2 – Interview Questions**

Initial Interview- to establish teaching assistants' prior knowledge and expectations

1. What did you take from the mindfulness training for staff?
2. What do you believe the benefits will be for introducing mindfulness into primary school?
3. Do you think there might be any problems in implementing mindfulness in schools?

Final Evaluative Interview -requesting information, evidence and judgement from the teaching assistants (Kushner, 2017)

1. Have you found the course beneficial for the class?
2. To what extent do you feel the children have learnt new concepts?
3. Do you think the children would put these new concepts/techniques into practice?
4. Would it be beneficial teaching these concepts earlier on?
5. What do you think of the content, materials and delivery?
6. Was there anything you felt didn't work so well?
7. How might the course be improved in terms of delivery?
8. Has it affected your own mindfulness?
9. Do you think the children enjoyed the lessons?

## Appendix 3 – Head Teacher Consent Letter

Dear Head Teacher

I am writing to request your assistance to carry out research into an evaluation of the Paws b curriculum and the potential benefits of these lessons for children and the school.

The research will start with an initial study of one class taking part in the 6-hour long lessons of the Paws b programme. Parents will be sent an information leaflet on the Paws b programme. If they have any questions, I will specify that meetings may be organised with me. Learning outcomes are already taught through the school's PSHE syllabus. I will keep a record of observations relating to pupil responses and behaviours during these sessions. I would also like to interview the class teacher or teaching assistant who will be present during these lessons. These interviews will take place after each weekly lesson and on completion of the course. Discussions will relate to their perceptions of pupil participation and any other noticeable changes during the course.

The study will then continue with another class taking part in the mindfulness programme. This time a group of children will be asked to discuss their perceptions of mindfulness each week in addition to the adult participant. Child and parental permission will be sought for children whose responses will be collected during these group discussions.

All data will be made readily available to adult participants and results available to you in discussion and written report format.

Information collected from all participants will be kept anonymous and stored securely. Only myself and the project supervisor will have access to the data and, in accordance with the requirements of some scientific journals and organisations, the coded data may be shared with other competent researchers. If there is a withdrawal of consent before the point of data collation, the data will be destroyed. No information leading to the identification of your school or the individual pupils will be included in any publication or distribution of the results.

Thank you for your assistance in carrying out this important evaluation which will help me assess the benefits of introducing mindfulness into primary school.

Yours Sincerely

Jane Calcutt

Primary Teacher and Open University Educational Doctorate Researcher

If you have any queries relating to this evaluation, please contact me on \*\*\*\*\*

or

\*\*\*\*\* My primary EdD Supervisor

---

## Appendix 4 – Adult Observer Information Letter

### School Staff Information (Q&A) about:

<b>The Evaluation of a Mindfulness Programme in a Primary School</b>
--

#### What is the aim of this research?

The purpose of this study is to gather school staff and children's views on the benefits of mindfulness. I will also be evaluating the feasibility of implementing mindfulness as a new school strategy along with successes/problems integrating this practice into the culture of a school. There will be a number of classes involved in the Paws b programme however only one class will be part of this study. This research complies with the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society, British Educational Research Association and has been approved by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee.

#### Who is conducting the research and who is it for?

I am Jane Calcutt, the Doctoral Researcher working on this project. The results of this study will be used as part of my Open University Educational Doctorate thesis. It is also part of a school initiative and school staff will be kept informed through staff briefings at certain points of the study. Conclusions will be written up in a report for school and may be presented to SLT and school governors. This report may also be used as evidence towards Section 5 of the OFSTED framework.

#### Why am I being invited to participate in this research?

As you have attended the INSET staff training on mindfulness in school and will be available to observe the Paws b lessons within one class, I would like to invite you to participate in our research.

#### If I take part in this research, what will be involved?

We will have an initial discussion about your views and understanding of mindfulness. I will transcribe the discussion. You will be given a copy of the transcription. I will choose statements that you have made and put them on cards. During the next session you will be able to construct a mind map of what your beliefs are regarding mindfulness. You may use the statements, drawings and/or photographs within a diagram to link up these ideas. You will be asked to be present for all the Paws b sessions conducted within your class (60 minutes a week for 11 weeks). After each session or at the end of the school day we will have a discussion of no longer than 20 minutes to discuss your views on mindfulness for yourself and the class. You may change or add to your mindfulness mind map. At the end of the Paws b programme, we will have a final interview to discuss changes in your own perceptions and those of the class. You will be able to keep your mind map and copy of your final interview transcript.

#### What will research participation be like?

You will be able to develop your own understanding of mindfulness through observing the class lessons and through our discussions afterwards. You may enjoy the mindfulness guided practices and begin to feel the benefits of weekly mindfulness sessions. At some point during the Paws b programme, you may wish to initiate your own mindfulness activity either with the class, small group or individual child and feedback your experiences of this within the weekly discussion.

#### What will we be talking about? Or what will you be observing?

We will be asking you about:

Your own opinions of how the Paws b lessons are conducted together with your views on the participation of the children.

How you see the understanding of mindfulness developing in the children and any behaviour outside of the lesson that may display this understanding and the techniques taught.

Also your own understanding of mindfulness and whether it is a practice that you have/or would like to take up.

#### Is it confidential?

Your participation will be treated in **strict confidence** in accordance with the Data Protection Act. No personal information will be passed to anyone outside the research team. We will write a report of the findings from this study, but no individual will be identifiable in published results of the research. You will be asked to choose your own pseudonym.

#### What happens now?

Over the next few weeks, I will contact you to ask if you would like to take part and, if so, set up an initial meeting before the class lessons start. **Your participation is entirely voluntary and you will be free to withdraw from the research at any time before the mindfulness lessons commence.**

## Appendix 5 – Child Information Letter

Your class will be learning about mindfulness through Paws b lessons with Mrs E\*\*\*\*.

Mindfulness means paying attention to what is happening right now with kindness and curiosity. We will learn about thoughts, feelings, friendships and kindness while practising attention and calming down strategies. We will also learn about different parts of the brain and what they do.

### Being a Scientist



When you learn about Mindfulness, it's like you are being a scientist. Like any scientist, you do experiments and you discover things.

Mrs E\*\*\*\* is finding out what children learn during Paws b lessons.

We will be starting a mindfulness lunch club where you can draw, write and talk about mindfulness. There are no right or wrong answers- it's all about your own opinions and what you think of the lessons.

You will choose your own mindfulness club name and take all your writing and pictures home. You can talk about your experiences with Mrs E\*\*\*\* or with a group of children. You can leave the club at any point during the 11 weeks it will run.

Mrs E\*\*\*\* will collect all your ideas together in her own research project to help teachers and other adults understand how useful these lessons are at school.

If you would like to take part in Mrs E\*\*\*\* mindfulness club, please sign the slip below and take a letter home for your parents to sign. You will need to bring back this signed form to join the club.

## Appendix 6 – Parent/Guardian Information Letter

Your child's class has been selected to take part in the Mindfulness in Schools Project Paws b programme. During these lessons the children will be talking about thoughts, feelings, friendships and kindness, while learning about functions of different parts of the brain. They will also practice attention and calming down strategies, through breathing exercises and practical activities such as mindful eating and gentle movement.

While the whole class will be participating in all lessons a number of children will be asked to take part in an additional activity after each lesson. This will involve either an individual or group discussion about what the lesson was like for them. To help explain their experiences children may wish to choose statements, draw pictures and include in their own mind map diagram. This diagram can be added to or changed each week within these discussions. All individual interviews and group discussions will be audio tape recorded.

This research complies with the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society, British Educational Research Association and has been approved by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee.

We are now seeking your consent for your child to participate. Your child's participation is completely voluntary. He/she may answer as many questions as they like, and will be free to withdraw from the research at any time before discussions are written up.

We would like to assure you that any information obtained from the discussions will be completely confidential. No names of children will be identified in the final write up of this study, and your child's responses will not form any part of his/her school record. Results will be used within an Open University Educational Doctorate thesis and conclusions will contribute towards a school report assessing the benefits of mindfulness and effectiveness of implementing the strategy.

If you have any questions about this, please contact Mrs E\*\*\*\* (Key Stage 2 support teacher), via the school office, who is the Educational Doctorate researcher working on this project. You may also wish to contact her research supervisor \*\*\*\*\* for additional information.

Thank you for your help in allowing your child to participate. We hope that the results will be of future benefit to children, parents and teachers by a greater understanding of how we might best listen to children and what their views and opinions are.

## Appendix 7 – Lesson Observation Sheet

***** School		
Paws b Programme Evaluation		
Co-researcher observing	Date	
Researcher/curriculum facilitator J. Calcutt	Class 3	
<p>Focus for observations-</p> <p>Content of lesson- learning objective and resources.  Pupil development of knowledge and any misunderstandings.  Pupil responses to the lesson- behaviour and motivation.  Any events related to mindfulness, that have happened this week outside of the lesson.  Your general feelings about how the lessons are going.</p>		
Time	What did the teacher do?	What were the pupils' responses?
Signed Observer		
Signed Teacher		

## Appendix 8 – Methods for Evaluation

Participants	Data Sources	Planned purpose and modifications
Mindfulness facilitator of the programme and researcher	Evaluation Journal Eleven entries written on the day of the lesson.	To record my thoughts and feelings on what I had taught and observed during each lesson. These entries were made immediately after each lesson. This type of data includes an account of how I viewed the children's reactions to the lessons but also records how I saw the adult observing participants responding to the lessons themselves. I became an observer of those observing the study. As we could not meet and discuss opinions as much as I had planned, a significant amount of the data here involves my judgement of how I believe the adults are feeling. The diary also includes some comments supplied by parents, other adults involved with the class and the head teacher.
Observing adults Blue- class based teaching assistant  Absent Day 10	Initial interview- Appendix 2 Interview audio-recorded, transcribed by myself and checked by Blue  Concept Map constructed by Blue from main points of interview.  Weekly discussion with myself directly after the lesson. Comments recorded in my journal during discussion Lesson Observation Sheets used from day 5- Appendix 7  Post programme evaluative Interview- Appendix 2 Interview audio-recorded, transcribed by myself and checked by Blue  Changes made by Blue to her concept map. Additional points included	To establish adult participants initial views and expectations on benefits and potential problems regarding a primary school mindfulness curriculum.  To allow reflection of responses given in the interview and identify overarching themes/connections  We planned to meet at the end of day in which the lesson was delivered. This was sometimes difficult to achieve so lesson observation sheets were also introduced. Comments related to her views of the lesson and the children's responses/behaviour both within and outside of class during the week.  To view changes in participant perceptions of the mindfulness lessons, including incidents and observations that have left a lasting impression on them.  To allow reflections on responses given in the interview, visually map changes and link ideas
Brooklyn- teaching assistant who had worked with the children the previous year  Absent Day 7, 8 and 11	Questionnaire- Appendix 9 This came after Brooklyn had observed six lessons.  Weekly discussion with myself the following day Lesson Observation Sheets- Appendix 7 used from day 5  Post programme evaluative Interview- Appendix 2 Interview audio-recorded, transcribed by myself and checked by Brooklyn  Concept map constructed by Brooklyn from main points of interview	Brooklyn expressed apprehension at the idea of face to face interview. We decided to conduct an early evaluation through email, due to Brooklyn's wishes and a lack of time available in school. I gave a copy of the questions which Brooklyn was able to reflect upon. She returned her answers in writing.  We could not meet on the same day as the lesson due to Brooklyn's commitments to another after school club. We would meet during the following day to discuss her views of the lesson and the children's responses. The notes Brooklyn made on her lesson observation sheets helped her reflect on the lesson during our discussions.  To view participant perceptions of the mindfulness lessons, including incidents and observations that have left a lasting impression on them.  To allow reflections on responses given in the interview, visually map and link ideas



<p>Anne- Year 3 teaching assistant based in another class</p> <p>Joined evaluation on Day 8</p>	<p>Initial interview- Appendix 2 Interview audio-recorded, transcribed by myself and checked by Ann</p> <p>Concept Map constructed by Ann from main points of interview.</p> <p>Weekly discussion with myself directly after the lesson. Comments recorded in my journal during discussion Lesson Observation Sheets- Appendix 7</p> <p>Post programme evaluative Interview- Appendix 2 Interview audio-recorded, transcribed by myself and checked by Anne</p> <p>Changes made by Anne to her concept map. Additional points included</p>	<p>To establish adult participants initial views and expectations on benefits and potential problems regarding a primary school mindfulness curriculum.</p> <p>To allow reflection of responses given in the interview and identify overarching themes/connections</p> <p>We planned to meet at the end of day in which the lesson was delivered. Informal discussions were achieved throughout the next day. Lesson observation sheets were introduced and Anne felt they helped her concentrate on the lesson. Comments related to her views of the lesson and the children's responses/behaviour both within and outside of class during the week.</p> <p>To view changes in participant perceptions of the mindfulness lessons, including incidents and observations that have left a lasting impression on them.</p> <p>To allow reflections on responses given in the interview, visually map changes and link ideas</p>
Head Teacher	Semi-structured interview- Appendix 10 Interview audio- recorded, transcribed by myself and checked by the head teacher	Interview took place 3 months after the Year 3 programme finished. Questions involved how the head teacher had viewed the evaluation after increased participation, changes she had witnessed in the children involved, her opinions and the success and further uses of pupil evaluation and ideas about mindfulness development within the school.
<p><b>Children's perspectives</b> Two pupil focus discussion groups</p>	<p>Mindfulness after school club Audio recorded discussion, transcribed by myself. A summary reported back to the group the next week for agreement and possible clarifications.</p>	Children's discussion relating to each lesson, including content and resources; feelings stimulated by activities and application of new skills and knowledge both in and out of school. Discussion with two groups of seven children took place during an after-school club. Each discussion took 30 minutes while the other group did a variety of art, craft and movement mindfulness activities in an adjacent room, supervised by one of the adult participants.
Additional information on children's perspectives within my diary	Directly questioning of the class within the lesson and noting extracts of conversations instigated by children outside of the lessons.	These were general questions included at the end of the lesson to establish learning outcomes and attitudes to the lesson. Pupil comments were included in the my diary for each week. Some children and additional adults (class teacher, parents) made unprompted comments about mindfulness to me, outside of the lessons, during the week. These were also recorded in my diary, with their verbal permission.

## **Appendix 9 – Brooklyn’s Written Questionnaire**

1. What did you take from the mindfulness training sessions for staff?
2. What do you believe would be the benefits for introducing mindfulness into primary school?
3. Do you think there might be any problems in implementing a mindfulness curriculum?
4. What do you think of the Paws b lessons so far? (e.g., content, resources, engagement of children, learning achieved, changing beliefs or behaviours)
5. Have the lessons developed your understanding of mindfulness? Have they made any impact on your personal practice?

## **Appendix 10 – Head Teacher Interview Questions**

1. What did you take from the mindfulness training for staff?
2. What do you believe will be the benefits for introducing mindfulness for the staff, children, yourself?
3. Do you think there might be any problems in implementing mindfulness in school?
4. Have the children talked to you about mindfulness?
5. What impact do you think the pupil discussion group activities have had on these children?
6. How useful would you now consider pupil evaluation of a new school initiative?
7. How useful would you consider staff evaluation of a new school initiative?
8. What future plans for mindfulness curriculum development could you now see?
9. Any future plans for using pupil focus group discussions?

## Appendix 11 – Pilot Study Analysis

The previous year I had trialled my methods and analysis through investigating adult views of the Paws b programme. I delivered six lessons, each lasting an hour, observed by the class-based teaching assistant.

The table below displays pilot study themes of content, awareness, connection and implication for programme development with their relevant sub themes. Each sub theme was classified relating to whether they were perceived as successful (1), indicating some progress/ mixed reactions (2) or displayed issues to be addressed (3). The final theme contained suggestions for programme progress and change, which came through evaluations agreed by us both.

Themes	Sub themes
Content of programme	Enjoyable 1 Accessible for all children 1 Adaptable to different age groups 1 Novel 2 Challenging at times 3 Length and frequency of lessons 3 Assessment of understanding 3
Awareness	Breath in Present Moment 1 Thoughts and Feelings 1 Choices 2
Connection	Between myself and the children- a transference of control 2 To experiences outside of mindfulness lessons 3
Suggestions for programme development	Shorter sessions over 12 weeks To maintain facilitator mindful awareness More practise of techniques inside and outside the classroom Different evaluation methods for children

## Appendix 12 – Data Analysis Transcript Example

Day 2 Diary

My views on the lesson

The lesson seemed much more relaxed today. I now know I can teach 3 mindfulness lessons in one afternoon and remain calm. Each lesson was around 20 minutes long. This was the second lesson on the prefrontal cortex and the children had remembered concentration and the effect of breathing. *Ass* They settled into counting breathes for a minute well although the child who had been absent for the first lesson was a little disruptive at first. I used any restless behaviour as a prompt for talking about making choices but also respecting other people's choices. This seemed to work in managing behaviour without me having to assert my authority. I was conscious of the social justice link between individual and collective needs as I talked about this.

The video of the Tom Daley dive had made quite an impression on the children and a number of them wanting to see this video again. *En* I could not play this video as I was conscious of the time. I also found it difficult to allow all the children to speak. A lot of children wanted to talk about times and activities they see concentration as being important and ways they notice themselves concentrating. Talking partners could have been used here but it seemed that the children wanted to share their views with me more. *MC*

Making choices seemed to link well with the concept of thinking and not making habitual decisions. I felt that as this was the second time I had taught this I was more confident explaining this principle. *C*

*C* The story of Goldilocks and the three bears provoked interest and the children seemed to enjoy talking about the choices Goldilocks had made. *En* They came to a joint decision that Goldilocks had not made very wise decisions. Choices and consequences were made very apparent through this activity.

Talking about choices the children had made did seem to slow down discussion but one child had said that he had chosen to come to school. This started a very interesting discussion about situations where we don't actually have a choice. We can however choose how we feel. This was the point where I introduced feelings briefly. *C* We also discussed the importance of listening to our bodies. *Ass* The children seemed to understand this well. Tiredness was an interesting conversation here- when best to go to bed.

I felt that this was a successful lesson. The children did not seem as excited by novelty but were still happy to participate. This lesson was a good opportunity to revise what had been covered last lesson and introduce the concept of making appropriate choices. I don't think the children had realised how many choices they do make in their lives. *C*

What I was aware of was [redacted] controlling the behaviour. She does interject at times when I am trying to reduce my control and encourage the children to take control of their own behaviour. This creates some difficulties. *MC* The children do respond to her discipline but I am trying to back away from my teacher role. I think I may need to share this objective with her. The delicate situation of her lack of enthusiasm may make this difficult. The class teacher, and previous class teacher, can be quite passive with their discipline strategies. I think she has taken over this role and has developed a habit of maintaining control.

## Appendix 13 – Data Analysis Table Example

Content of Programme	Programme evaluation
<p>Enjoyable</p> <p>Mindfulness group</p> <p>Videos gym, petrole flowers fight, flight freeze</p>	<p>The lesson was two thumbs up. I liked learning about different words for the brain and how to keep calm.</p> <p>Lesson 1 Ashley G I like these lessons. In Maths and English it's all about writing stuff but in this lesson you could write or draw or talk- Jo Lesson 2 [Thumbs up]- Luna Lesson 2 Oh I see- so coming to the mindfulness group is nice because you have more time with your friends. I'm so glad you have this opportunity- Myself Lesson 2 I like mindfulness because I get to know more about the brain, to see what parts of the brain I have. Also to learn how to do massages for my sister and my parents- Brittany Lesson 2 I liked the Play Attention because I could take breaths and concentrating- Brittany Lesson 3 I liked the lesson because it was really calm and quiet because I don't like things being loud because I've got sensitive ears- Delliah Lesson 3 It was good because when we were doing it, the first minstrel was harder, the second minstrel was tastier. When we ate the last one we thought more about it- Black Might Lesson 4 Ah so you gave it more attention and it was tastier? Yes Did you think the lesson was interesting? Yes Ashley Lesson 4 They are interesting lessons and I get to know more about mindfulness, how to control my brain better. I think it's really exciting to know things about your brain- Brittany Lesson 4 No I mean your mind. Your brain can't come out of your head. Your mind can experience new things you haven't actually seen before. I thought it was quite fun because I was concentrating on putting my finger around my hand. It made me think of being on a slide going up and down- Heather Lesson 5 I really like finger breathing. My finger went up and down but when I got here it felt really relaxing. When I was going up and down it felt really tickly- Jo Lesson 5 It was good. I liked finger breathing too- Vergil Lesson 5 Yes- paws on the floor- standing? I liked the lesson. It was really calm. I don't like it when it's really loud in class. I have sensitive ears- Delliah Lesson 5 I could have a go at making my bubble quieter in noisy lessons. For me it was really exciting because I got to know how we react to others and also my favourite part was when we were looking at the <u>gymnast</u> who was not giving up- Ashley Lesson 6 I remember thinking about what the dogs were thinking and how they were feeling. I really liked those pictures- Burger Lesson 6 I really like FOFBOC because it makes me concentrate. I also liked watching the flowers open. It helped me notice my breathing and calm down- Eliza Lesson 7 I found that breathing really satisfying. How did they film the flowers? Was the film speeded up? Heather Lesson 7 I liked the video of the flowers and doing the petal breathing- Heather Lesson 7 I liked the videos- Magic Lesson 7- fight, flight and freeze I've loved every single lesson. It's interesting and it's very fun learning new things about our brains-</p>

Pupil Group

practical  
activities  
mindful  
Play Attention  
finger  
breathing  
calm  
bubble



## Appendix 14 – Summary of Paws b Lessons

MiSP (2015)

1. Our Amazing Brain covers lessons 1 and 2 in which the children explore how mindfulness can help us to train our minds to change our brain. The 4 key areas of the brain are introduced, beginning with the Prefrontal Cortex. Breath is explored in relation to improving concentration, increasing our ability to make informed choices and achieving success with new learning and skills. Activities include naming the parts of the brain, watching a video of Tom Daley preparing to dive, counting breathes in a minute and discussion on activities we enjoy, want to improve and every day personal choices.
2. Puppy Training covers lessons 3 and 4 in which the children are introduced to their faculty of attention. Mindfulness can help us to concentrate when we need to and recognise how choices that we make everyday impact on our lives. The children experience how they can direct their attention though seeing the changing focus of a torch light. An analogy is made between the mind and a puppy, as both can be trained through kindness, patience and repetition. Activities include tummy and chest breathing, Paws b breathing while standing up and experiencing mindless and mindful eating of chocolate. The section of the brain called the hippocampus is introduced, which creates memories and links new experiences with previous ones. The concept of autopilot in everyday life is also discussed, stimulated by photographs and scenarios.
3. Finding a Steady Place covers lessons 5 and 6 in which the children recognise that we can have wobbles in both our bodies, minds and the connection between body, mind and emotions. A snow globe is used to display how the mind reacts during a wobble. There is an exploration of why Weebles wobble but don't fall down. Breath awareness practices are expanded to include finger breathing, where a finger moves up and down each finger on the hand in response to the in and out breath. The insula is introduced, which recognises different body states and what mood someone else is in. Activities include looking pictures of puppies, kittens and discussion on perceived emotional states. A film of a falling gymnast is shown to illustrate wobbling, steadying and perseverance. Children experience standing on one leg while concentrating to improve balance. The sitting practice called FOFBOC (feet on floor, bottom on chair) focuses on awareness of the lower body to settle body, mind and emotions.

4. Dealing with Difficulty can cover two lessons, however during this study all content was covered effectively within lesson 7. The amygdala is introduced which creates human and animal fight, flight and freeze responses towards the perception of fear. This lesson contains a number of videos showing animal survival instincts from a natural history programme; a child's temper tantrum in a supermarket; a young girl becoming anxious and freezing during a performance on Britain's Got Talent and a young child running away from chickens while holding a bag of bread. A discussion follows on how mindfulness allows us to notice what is happening and choose an appropriate response to a situation. A video showing flowers blooming, with calming background music, is shown followed by the technique called Petal Practice, which involves moving fingers open and closed simultaneously with the breath. There is then a discussion on the importance of openness and kindness towards self.
5. The Storytelling Mind covers lessons 8 and 9. Children explore, through sentences, stories and visual illusions, the nature of the mind which tries to make sense of perceived information through guessing, assuming and believing it knows. Meta-cognitive awareness is encouraged through learning that thoughts are often habits of mind. The connections between thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations are explored through a current bun diagram and metaphors of worries as snowballs rolling down a hill, hamsters on a wheel and kittens tied up with string. Activities include discussion on Scooby Doo's fears and analysing Captain Hook's reaction to the crocodile in the Disney cartoon. Children continue to rehearse Petal Practice breathing.
6. Happiness covers lessons 10 and 11. Children investigate how we can best nurture ourselves and others. An exploration of the nature of happiness occurs through the music video of Don't Worry Be Happy and bringing happy memories to mind, through the current bun diagram from the previous lesson. Understanding how we have the ability to create space and choices around happiness is discussed and a short film of a man creating a contagious laugh on a metro train illustrates the concept of encouraging and sharing happiness. The Yum Factor picture of a baby enjoying a melting chocolate biscuit promotes a discussion on savouring happiness and connection between happiness, kindness and gratitude is explored. The torchlight of attention is revised in relation to how mindfulness can help us focus, choose where we place our attention, deal with difficulties and wobbles, whilst also allowing a greater awareness of happiness around us. The art activity of creating a happy picture is suggested as a home practice but can be incorporated into the lesson if time permits.



## Appendix 15 – Adult Participant Concept Maps

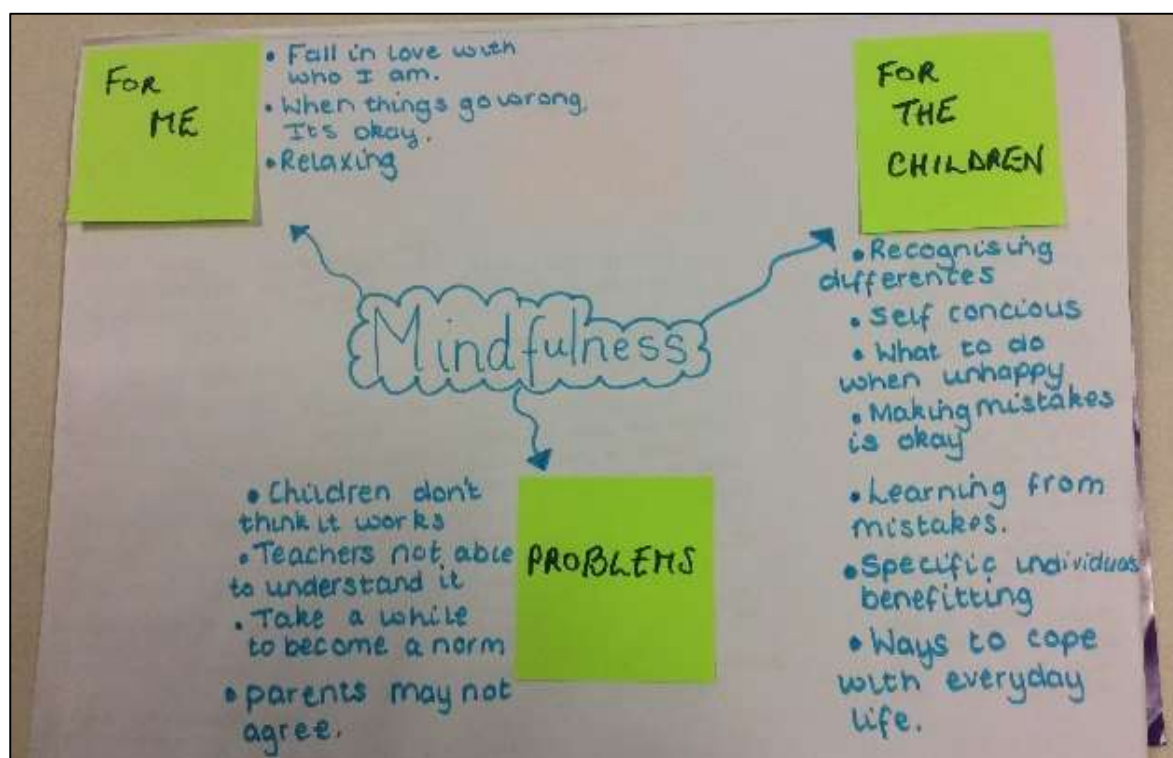


Figure 1: Blue- Concept map created after initial interview  
As Blue has Dyslexia, she felt a level of anxiety when writing.



Figure 2: Blue- Concept map after final interview  
Initials relate to individual children Blue was referring to while referring to initial comments written in blue.

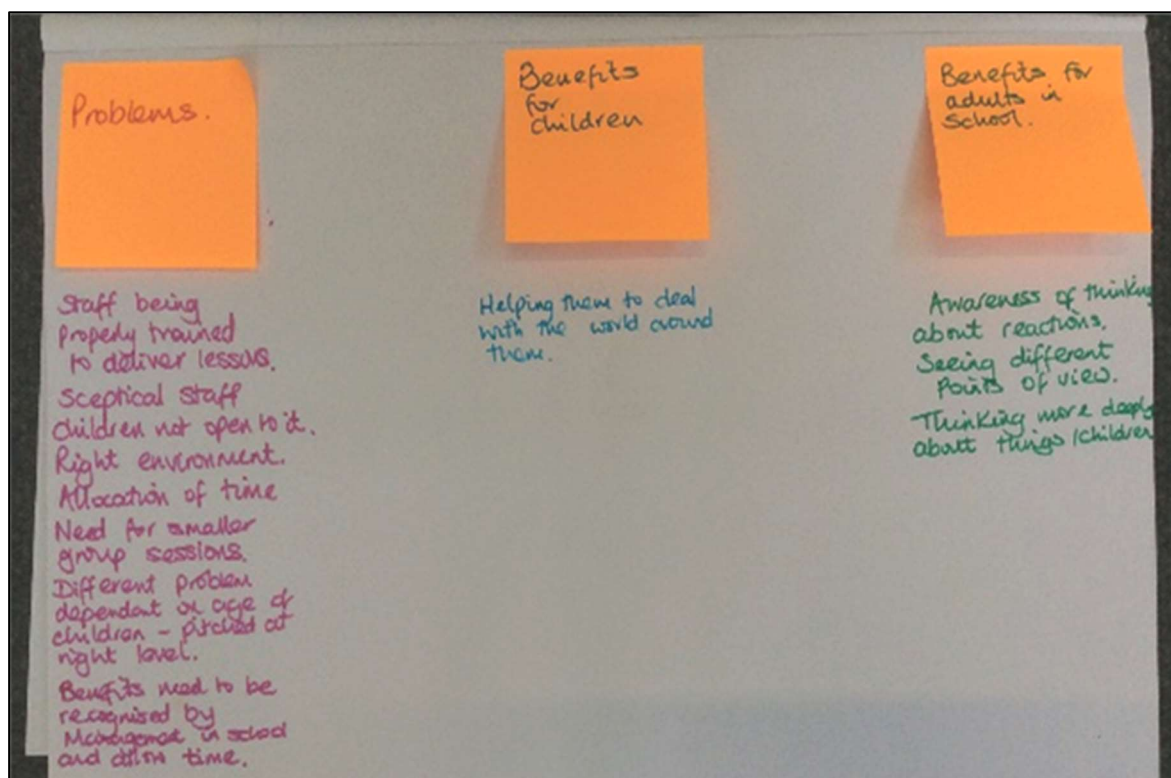


Figure 3- Ann- Concept map created after initial interview  
Anne was not a participant when the programme started.

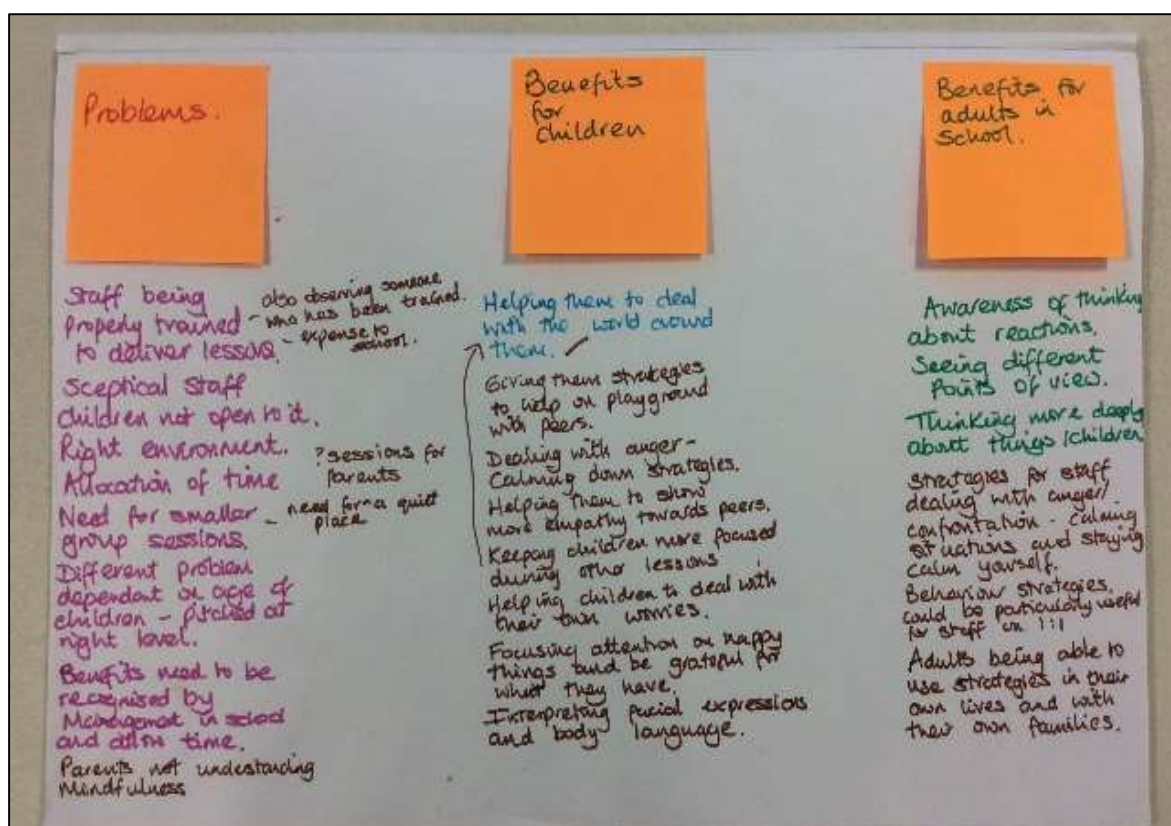


Figure 4: Ann- Concept map after final interview



Brooklyn- No initial interview conducted or concept map made due to time constraints in school. Brooklyn also expressed anxiousness about an initial interview. Brooklyn did supply written responses to a series of questions (Appendix 9)

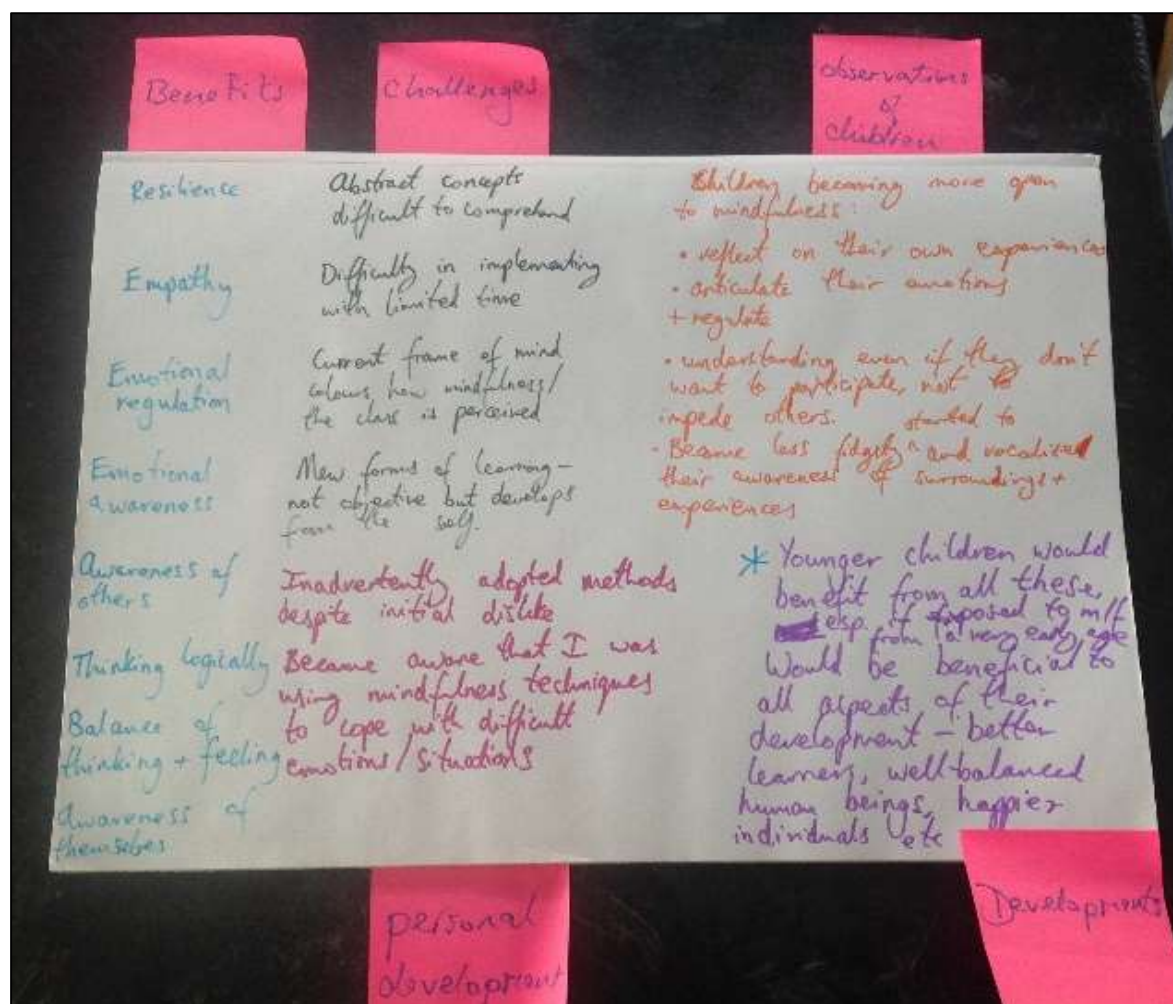


Figure 5: Brooklyn- Concept Map after interview

## Appendix 16 – Some Pictures from the Lessons

These visuals were specifically related to in the data used.



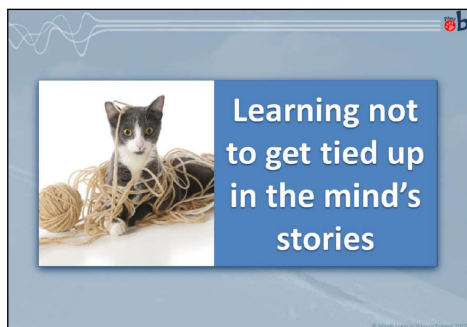
Burger (girl) enjoyed looking at pictures of puppies and thinking about how they might be feeling.  
(Evaluator Diary Lesson 6)

© Mindfulness in Schools Project

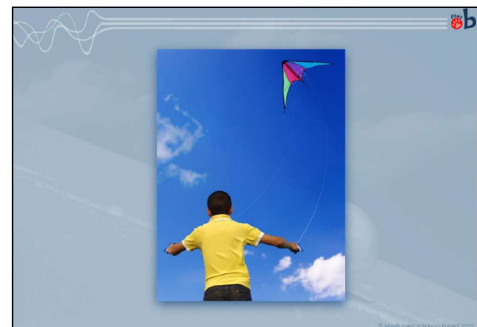
Ninja, Vergil and Luna enjoyed watching Scooby Doo cartoons so were particularly pleased to see this picture.  
(Evaluator Diary Lesson 9)



© Mindfulness in Schools Project



© Mindfulness in Schools Project



© Mindfulness in Schools Project

Pictures, such as a cat tangled up with string and a kite flying free were effective analogies for how mindfulness encourages clearer thought when our minds become confused.  
(Evaluator Diary Lesson 9)

I loved learning about the kitten tangled up in the string. I feel like that when I get confused with my thoughts. (Magic Lesson 9)

I like climbing frames and always reach the top.  
I feel good when I am there. This picture reminds me of those feelings. (Ninja Lesson 10)



© Mindfulness in Schools Project

Permission granted by Mindfulness in Schools Project  
for use of visuals

## Appendix 17 – Children’s Voices Supporting Social Justice Features

Social Justice Features	Data from Pupil Focus Group
Fairness and equity of opportunity	<p>I feel angry sometimes when playing a game like cops and robbers with my dad and brother. It feels unfair when my dad goes with my brother and I’m on my own- Jo Lesson 7</p> <p>Playing with my pen helps me concentrate but it might take away other people’s choice to concentrate- Vergil Lesson 4</p> <p>I think it is because some kids are becoming really excited about Christmas and they might start to wobble. It’s ok unless we’ve got to do something else that needs concentration- Eliza Lesson 6</p> <p>When Burger was playing with the frog she used her pre-frontal cortex to make a decision not to play with it anymore- Eliza Lesson 7 Yes, I thought it was not fair on the others- Burger Lesson 7</p> <p>If you are silly, you are taking other people’s choice to join in away from them if they can’t keep their torchlight of attention on the lesson- Delilah Lesson 10</p> <p>Jo and Ninja are respecting us because they are being quiet and not disturbing our conversation- Eliza Lesson 5</p>
Freedom of expression	<p>I was pretty bored because I didn’t understand a lot of it....about teaching the dog- Magic Lesson 2</p> <p>I didn’t get the idea that your mind is like a puppy- Heather Lesson 3</p> <p>No I didn’t like the lesson. I wasn’t quite sure about what we were learning- Jo Lesson 3</p> <p>I thought the lesson was a bit boring. For me it’s hard to sit still - Christina Lesson 5</p> <p>I felt a bit bored too. All we did was concentrate- Heather Lesson 5</p> <p>I thought it was kind of boring as I didn’t like finger breathing. I found it hard to breathe and I didn’t get to see the weebles- Luna Lesson 5</p> <p>I felt a bit strange because we didn’t do much in the lesson- Brittany Lesson 5</p> <p>No, I didn’t like the lesson. It’s because it was scaring me. I didn’t like the noise and it was making me think that something bad was about to happen- Burger Lesson 10</p> <p>I feel I’ve been a bit more shy in lessons. I don’t really put my hand up in any lessons. I put my hand up more in Maths and English. I think it’s because I’m not sure what to say in mindfulness- Vergil Lesson 10</p> <p>I didn’t like the Paws b because I couldn’t really stand up straight. It didn’t feel relaxing, it felt like an effort. Other than that, I thought it was good but not the best lesson- Luna Lesson 9</p> <p>I would prefer PSHE lessons because they are more interesting- Heather Lesson 9</p>

	<p>I was a bit frustrated. I didn't find the lesson that good but I did laugh at the video- Rachel Lesson 10</p> <p>Mindfulness lessons make me confident. I'm not scared about being wrong because you can't be wrong- Ninja B Lesson 2</p> <p>It is different to most lessons because the teacher doesn't ask you if you like the lesson. We get to talk about making sensible choices here - Luna Lesson 10</p> <p>We could let our parents join in our mindfulness club. We could talk to our parents about mindfulness the way we talk about it to you- Magic Lesson 10</p>
Empathy through multiple perspectives	<p>I remember thinking about what the dogs were thinking and how they were feeling - Burger Lesson 6</p> <p>If you are worrying about someone who is going to be mad at you because you've done something wrong, or you might have broken their toys, you can breathe and find the person and say you're really sorry - Brittany Lesson 8</p> <p>It is normal to feel sad if your friend has been mean to you, that would make you feel sad. But if you use mindfulness you might think about it in another way. You might see that your friend did not mean to be horrible or that they are not a very good friend anyway. You shouldn't get mad and mindfulness helps us calm down. You can't sort out a problem if you are mad- Christina Lesson 11</p> <p>When you asked Grace a question before and she didn't answer I think she just froze- Heather Lesson 7</p> <p>I used mindfulness on Monday because I was told to do a job. I really didn't want to do it. I wanted to do a load of fun stuff instead. I went to my room and thought for a moment what to do and about mindfulness. I did finger breathing then did the job that my mum asked me to do- Brittany Lesson 10</p> <p>I think my dad would come to mindfulness because my brother is always very naughty and Dad doesn't know what to do. Sometimes Dad gets very angry- Christina Lesson 2</p> <p>The little girl singing made me feel sad because she was really, really scared and wanted to cry- Delilah Lesson 7</p> <p>I thought about the girl. She was scared and wobbling but did manage to sing some of the song. She kept going and being brave and everyone cheered for her- Magic Lesson 7</p> <p>I think it would be good for Lilly to concentrate on her colouring and pay attention to that. It might take her mind off feeling ill. It could help her brain relax- Eliza Lesson 8</p> <p>Little children might worry about scary monsters under their beds- Sponge Bob Lesson 8</p> <p>I felt very sorry for Chris because I thought the children were being mean to her- Luna Lesson 9</p> <p>When the people on the train looked sad I felt sorry for them and then it made me feel sad. The lady looked at the advert of the people having fun at the beach. I felt sorry for them because they were in a dark and dull place. When they were sad I felt sad and when they were happy I felt happy too- Ashley Lesson 10</p> <p>I've seen a change in Aleesia. She can struggle and get upset because she finds it difficult to understand English. Now she seems calmer and happier- Christina Lesson 10</p>

	<p>Some people, like Billy, talk to other children but today he's actually been listening to what you've been saying. It's good because he can learn more about the brain and when he grows up he'll know what to do when someone hurts him or when he's hurt someone- Christina Lesson 11</p> <p>Teachers would like mindfulness lessons because we are nice and quiet. If someone is not respecting them they can breathe to relax and calm down- Eliza Lesson 5</p>
<p><b>Recognising similarities</b></p> <p>(Note use of pronouns to include us and we.)</p>	<p>Mindfulness helps us calm down when the teacher asks questions and helps us learn new things. It good to tell new things to your friends and family- Magic Lesson 2</p> <p>Yes, it was the bit when the light went back and forwards I didn't get that- Magic Lesson 3- Me neither- Heather Lesson 3</p> <p>Worries are things that we think when we are awake and also asleep when we have dreams- Luna Lesson 8</p> <p>I thought that the girl was trying to get over stage fright. Sometimes when we practise really hard it gets scary when we have to perform and everyone is looking at us- Luna Lesson 7</p> <p>Brittany was speaking about losing attention when she saw the picture on the board that happened to me during a lesson. I was thinking about too many things- Ashley Lesson 9</p> <p>When Alicja said she was scared, something like that happened to me- Christina Lesson 9</p>
<b>Appreciating differences</b>	<p>I like Susie's because our minds changed thoughts. First when you hear that she's riding on a bus everyone might think differently- Brittany Lesson 8</p> <p>It was fun because I like listening to everyone else's ideas- Luna Lesson 1</p> <p>I think some people like mindfulness and some people don't. I think Travis wasn't paying attention in the last lesson and his torchlight wasn't going towards you. He kept playing with the pencil case- Eliza Lesson 11</p> <p>There is no right or wrong answer. It's about making things different by thinking different things. It's like when some of us thought Susie was old and some of us thought Susie was young- Brittany Lesson 10</p> <p>If you don't want to answer a question that's ok because it's your choice. I like answering questions. I like the fact that I am not right or wrong- Luna Lesson 10 Yes I listen all the time but I answer the questions in my head- Vergil Lesson 10</p>
<b>Respecting yet questioning authority</b>	<p>I liked the minstrel lesson but don't like it when you read questions out and tell us to answer them in our heads- Luna Lesson 7</p> <p>In lessons I can get a bit bored because I don't really know what you are talking about- Christina Lesson 4</p> <p>Do you know when you said that laughter was contagious Me and Billy didn't think it was that funny. We weren't laughing- Luna Lesson 10</p>
<b>Intentions to make the world a better place</b>	<p>When I was sitting at home and was feeling bored I asked myself what should I do and a breathed. It helped me think of an idea. I thought about sea animals and I thought about school. I noticed that I wanted to help save them by using less plastic. I got a load of crisp packets and glued them into piles. I hope this might save sea animals- Ashley Lesson 7</p>

	<p>When the child lost his temper it must have embarrassed the dad and made me think about not embarrassing my dad like that, to calm down and make the right choices- Magic Lesson 7</p> <p>I didn't like seeing the boy's reaction in front of everyone. I would never do that. It would be embarrassing for my mum and dad- Magic Lesson 7</p> <p>When my mum had a sore toe, she broke it by falling down the stairs, Me and my dad helped her up. After that the doctor came and I told her to breathe three times and it helped her relax- Magic Lesson 8</p> <p>It was a train and everyone was feeling really sad. I think that the guy was just trying to make everyone happy. It's like if you have a sad friend and you would like them to be more happy, you could make a joke or make them laugh. I thought he was fake laughing but he might have been thinking about something happy and it made everyone join in. Your thoughts can change the way you feel and if you help your friend think happy thoughts they could feel better- Brittany Lesson 10</p> <p>When I was in town I saw this homeless person and I felt really sorry for him. He smiled at me and I smiled back. I felt that he was happy because I had smiled back. I might have cheered him up in a little way. I could make more people happy if I smiled at them- Eliza Lesson 10</p> <p>You can spread along your happiness so everyone else can be happy- Brittany Lesson 11</p> <p>I like to tell my mum all about mindfulness. I want to learn more to tell her all about it. She's very interested in it. If my mum gets really mad when I do something wrong she can breathe and calm down. She won't lose her voice- Eliza Lesson 6</p> <p>I think it would be good for adults to come to mindfulness because it's really fun and you can learn activities to do with your children when they are really bored. When adults get really mad at their children they can breathe and calm down- Eliza Lesson 8</p> <p>My parents would like to learn mindfulness. My dad's a little bit stressed. He had an interview and it didn't really go well. He felt sad and stressed afterwards and I think mindfulness would help- Christina Lesson 8</p>
--	--